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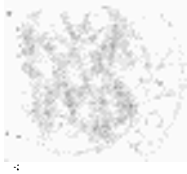

THE CAPTAIN'S DOG.

BY

LOUIS ENAULT.

1824-1900

WITH NUMEROUS ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS,

By RIOU.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE great success that this work has achieved in France seems to justify the hope that it will successfully stand the crucial test of translation into our own languge. That M. Enault has vividly and truthfully portrayed the life of the dog whose history is narrated in the following pages will, I think, be admitted by all who may peruse this little book which is now placed before the English-speaking public; and if the reading of it results in the better appreciation of some now neglected specimen of the canine race, I feel sure that the author will not regret the extension of his circle of readers. Feeling, however, that the work will recommend itself far more ably than I can, I leave it to fight its own battle with little fear for the result.

J. A. A.

UPPER CLAPTON,
August, 1880.

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THE CAPTAIN'S DOG.

CHAPTER I.

"WHERE is Zero?" asked Captain Pigott of his wife during dinner. "I am so accustomed to having him here at meal-times, that when he is away I feel quite uncomfortable."

"I have shut him up," drily replied the person thus addressed, who was no other than Mrs. Pigott herself. Her maiden name was Morgan, her father being a small farmer living on the outskirts of the pretty little town of Honfleur, and she had only been married about six months to the old sea-captain John Pigott, who enjoyed a modest competence honourably earned by hard work both at sea and on shore.

"Why have you shut him up?" asked her husband.

"Because I find him altogether unbearable at meal-times! It's bad enough to have him worrying us out of our lives during the rest of the day; at any rate, let us have this little bit of quiet."

Mrs. Pigott was still speaking, when a healthy, rosy-looking servant, who occupied the position of maid-of-all-work to the little establishment, entered the dining-room to change the plates.

As soon as the door was opened wide enough to admit him, a dog of medium size, but apparently possessed of wonderful activity, rushed into the room like a whirlwind, ran round and round the table like a madman, tearing the red drugget with his claws,—upset a chair, put his paws into a plate that had accidentally been left on the floor, and drew down upon his head the wrath of a large red, yellow, and green macaw who had been solemnly perched on one end of its stand.

Mrs. Pigott's eyes were a clear blue, and shone like two steel points. Zero must have met her glance, for he stopped in the midst of his gambols as if by magic, and went behind his master's chair, crouching close to the ground, evidently trying to make himself as small as possible, and trembling in every limb.

"Will you never get rid of that stupid brute?" asked Mrs. Pigott in her most provoking manner.

"He loves me so much," gently replied her husband, "that I should be very glad if you would let him stop."

"He has no business here," she replied angrily. "And if you had to choose between us, I know very well which you would select."

HE UPSET A CHAIR.

"He never says anything to me against you," said John Pigott naïvely, and possibly rather maliciously; "but I know you don't really believe what you say; you know quite well how dearly I love you—too dearly, perhaps—and you take advantage of my weakness."

"Well!" said Mrs. Pigott, "while we are discussing

the question, that horrid dog is still in the room, but I know that is just what both you and he want."

Pigott rose without replying, and called to Zero in a low voice.

The dog evidently understood that this time all resistance would be useless; he rose and left his place behind his master's chair, where he had been so comfortable, and followed.

"Come, poor old fellow," said Pigott, as soon as they were out of the room, at the same time affectionately patting his head; "you know that we can't do just as we should like now! It's not the same as it used to be when I was a bachelor."

He shut the dog up in a sort of wash-house which adjoined the house, where he was sure no one would be likely to go during dinner-time; then he re-entered the dining-room, evidently rather downcast, and without saying anything again took his seat.

But his wife's face did not wear the angry expression that Pigott had anticipated; on the contrary, she seemed softened by her triumph, which showed that she was not bad-hearted. In fact, like a generous foe, she was disarmed by her victory. It was easy to see that her husband was pleased to find her in such a good temper, and probably he said to himself that after all it would be foolish to allow a dog to disturb the

peace of his establishment, and he glanced at his wife with an expression which plainly asked her to forget what had happened.

Mrs. Pigott was hasty, but not really bad at heart; the daughter of respectable parents, and well brought up by them, she loved her husband dearly, and after all that is the great thing; but, although she loved him dearly, she did not always show it. To tell the truth, there was in her affection a certain amount of fickleness and a good deal of tyranny. Good at heart, and with many excellent qualities, which did not perhaps appear at first sight, such as she was, her husband almost worshipped her.

Pigott formed a most striking contrast to his wife, and perhaps that was the reason why they suited each other so well. John was the very type of a sea-captain; broad shoulders and chest, with a face bronzed by the suns of many climes; his eyes were large and blue as the waves that he had so often battled with; a large mouth, but a frankness of expression which at once took your heart by storm; a loud voice and hearty laugh. When walking on land he rolled about as if he were trying to keep his balance on the bridge of his ship; but for all that he could carry a sack of wheat from the quay to the granary with the greatest ease. There was not a silver thread in his hair, which was thick

and rough like a lion's mane; not a grey hair could be seen in his beard, which he wore cut to a point in the American fashion. He had been fortunate in his voyages, and at forty-five he had retired with a fortune sufficient to enable him to live in comfort. The first time he met Eliza he fell in love with her, made her an offer the next day, and a month after, with a fair wind and all sail set, started on the voyage of conjugal life, which is perhaps as perilous as those on the other ocean which he had hitherto navigated.

Taken as a whole, it was a happy household. Zero, the dog, had up to this point been the only black spot on the matrimonial horizon; but does not a small cloud often indicate that stormy weather will follow? At any rate, the sailors think so.

Eliza pretended that Zero robbed her of her husband's affections. By constantly repeating this she had at last got to believe it, and hated the poor dog, who had never done her any harm, but who, feeling himself disliked—for unlike men, animals are never deceived under such circumstances—had wisely decided to give up trying to conciliate his mistress. This, however, had not happened all at once. On the contrary, at first he had tried to propitiate her by an appearance of submission, and by a thousand marks of respect and affection. He had been lavish in his

display of attention on her first arrival at the house, where nevertheless he had been installed long before she came. But he soon perceived that it was useless to try to creep into her good graces, and therefore with canine dignity he retired to his kennel, and decided in future to take no more notice of his mistress than if she no longer existed—in fact, from his point of view she no longer *did* exist.

This misunderstanding between two creatures who were both so dear to him, although in different ways, had not escaped the observation of Pigott. The honest captain was greatly troubled by it, for he desired a kindly feeling to exist amongst all who lived near him, and especially between his wife and his dog. It was not with the latter that the difficulty arose; Pigott knew this perfectly well, and like a kind master, tried to make up for his wife's unkindness by loving Zero more. This increase of affection, which he could not conceal, did not at all improve matters with Eliza. In spite of appearances or reason, she persisted in saying that the love he gave to Zero was a portion of what rightfully belonged to her, and her hatred of him daily increased.

The involuntary cause of this unfortunate misunderstanding, did not seem at first sight to particularly deserve the love of one or the dislike of the other.

Like many a man of our acquaintance, he was totally devoid of dignity. Nature had denied him all external advantages; there was nothing at all striking about him. He was, however, possessed of a warm heart, but it was enclosed in an unattractive body. He was of no particular breed; his body was long, with short legs and an enormous head, with a bristling moustache and a sort of topknot which fell over his eyes, and at any rate gave him an original appearance, different from any other dog; his hair was as mixed as his blood, for it was pepper and salt, like that of a man of fifty-five, part straight, part curly, smooth on his hind-quarters and thighs, with a mane on the back of his neck which fell over his shoulders like a lion's. All this gave him a singular appearance, without much to admire. No one would have thought that such a dog would ever be preferred as a companion to a pretty woman, and it could be easily understood how it was that Mrs. Pigott so disliked him.

But if you knew him well, you would confess that never were external defects more completely redeemed by mental qualities of a most extraordinary description. Intelligence sparkled in his eyes, which were full of mischief and fun. He had the pluck of a dozen dogs. As to his heart, M. Buffon would have been proud to write the epitaph of such a dog. The affec-

tion that he had for his master amounted almost to a passion. Captain Pigott had neither bought, bred, found, or had him given to him. The way in which he had fallen into his hands was quite romantic.

Some time before his marriage, before even he had contemplated such a step, the Captain was one day walking on the pier, watching the ships entering and leaving the port. This pastime always seems to have a peculiar fascination for old sailors, who generally retain their fondness for the sea they have known so well.

All at once his attention was attracted by the shouts and boisterous laughs of a group of big boys who were throwing stones into the river, and who uttered joyful exclamations whenever their shots hit the mark. Pigott knew that boys of this age are without pity, as the poet justly remarks, and suspecting that they were up to some mischief, he walked to the edge to see what was the victim of these cruel youngsters.

At some distance from the bank he saw a wretched dog struggling with difficulty against the current, which at this place was very strong. In spite of this, however, he would have succeeded in landing, for he was a bold and vigorous swimmer, but every time he approached the bank he was pitilessly repulsed by the shouts and blows of his ruthless enemies. It was

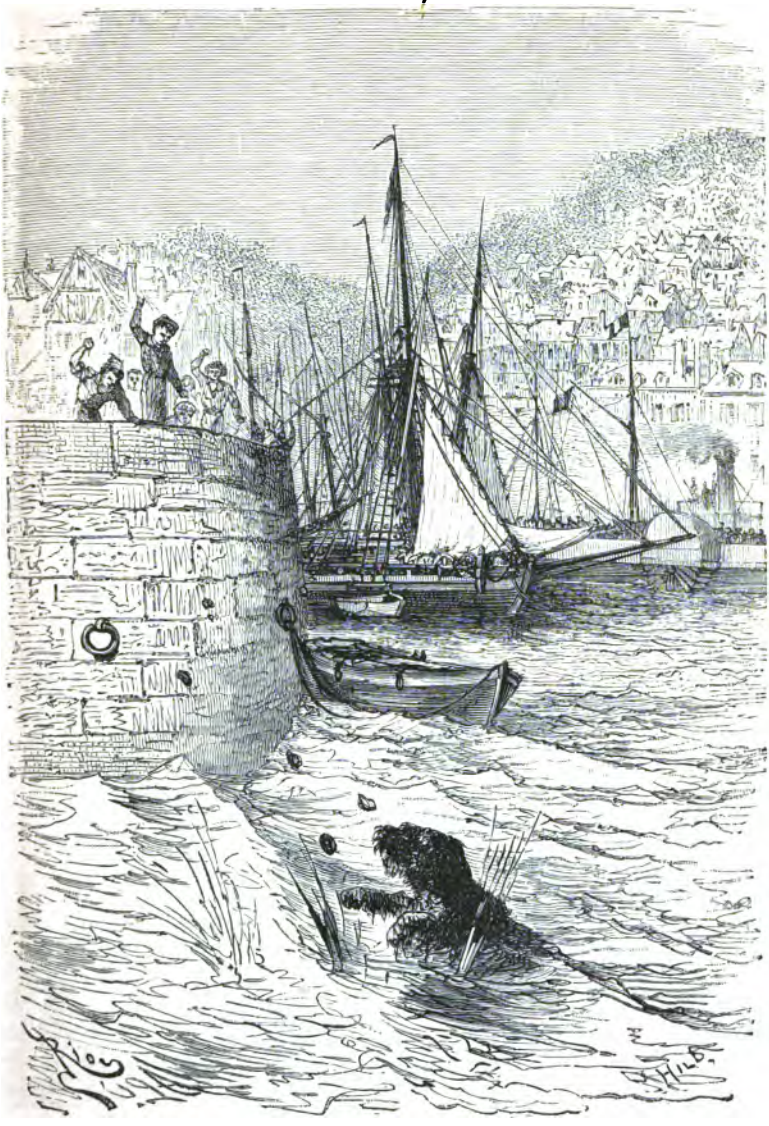
clear that these young wretches wished to drown him. It seemed likely, too, that they would not have long to wait, for the dog, quite tired out, was exhausting himself with fruitless efforts, and seemed on the point of sinking.

A righteous anger and gentle compassion filled the Captain's heart. "You young rascals!" he cried, "if you don't leave off directly, I'll throw you into the water instead of that poor dog, who is worth the whole lot of you."

As he uttered these words with great energy, the boys all sneaked off without saying a word, like a flock of frightened sparrows.

The dog soon saw that he had now a fair chance, and understood that this new-comer was indeed a friend. His strength returned; he swam with renewed vigour; and, in spite of the current, succeeded in reaching the shore.

Now it was that the Captain had the first evidence of the extraordinary intelligence that was afterwards so often shown by Zero. He had doubtless heard some one say that nothing is more disagreeable than to be near a wet dog when he is shaking himself. Instead, therefore, of going at once to thank his deliverer, he went a few paces off in order to first make himself respectable; and it was only after he had



HE WAS EXHAUSTING HIMSELF WITH FRUITLESS EFFORTS.

ASTOR, LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

shaken himself nearly dry that he slowly and cautiously approached the Captain with the air of one who has experienced so many rebuffs that he is compelled to mistrust everybody.

He stopped, however, at some little distance from the Captain, as if he did not dare to approach nearer, beating the ground with his bushy tail, and looking at him with a bright, intelligent glance, which expressed his feelings more eloquently than the most pompous or flowery language could have done.

Pigott understood this "speaking silence," and was quite as much touched with it as he would have been by livelier demonstrations, perhaps even more so, and he called to the dog in a kind voice, at the same time patting his knee with his hand to encourage him.

"Come here, poor old fellow," said he, "and let us make each other's acquaintance."

The dog must have understood him, for he came nearer, but only little by little, evidently in great fear, and stopped again a little way off, still looking at him with his large brown eyes, which plainly begged for kindness and pity.

"How shamefully he must have been ill-treated, to be so frightened of one who doesn't want to hurt him!" said the kind-hearted Pigott to himself. "I expect he's hungry. He looks as if he hadn't eaten for a

long time. Come along," he said, with a smile. "I want to make somebody happy to-day. I am going to invite you to supper; only perhaps you have not even had breakfast!"

The Captain was a man of action, and was not in the habit of wasting words. He went up to the dog; and although he was still rather wet and covered with mud, he gently patted him, and spoke so encouragingly to him that he evidently understood perfectly.

"You are not handsome!" he said; "but you don't look quite so bad as you did. Perhaps we shall before long get to understand each other, and you will take the place of my poor Blackie, whose kennel is still empty. Come along, then. It is seven o'clock, and we shall find the cloth laid, and supper on the table; and Jane won't like us to keep her waiting, I can tell you!"

The dog remained motionless for some moments in the same place, as if he were reflecting or deliberating within himself. But soon, doubtless thinking that his debt was sufficiently paid, he seemed to come to a decision, made a half-turn to the left, and going back again to the edge of the river, looked towards the horizon, where he saw a large ship just disappearing, which, with all sail set, was sailing towards the high seas.

"You ungrateful fellow!" murmured Pigott to himself. "I wished to take care of you; but if you think I am going to do so by force, you are greatly mistaken. You are not handsome enough for me to take you home and wash you (you want it badly enough); so, if you don't wish to come, good-bye. You owe me a good turn at any rate; but I don't suppose I shall ever see you again." And beginning to sing in a deep baritone voice a favourite nautical song, the Captain thrust his hands right down to the bottom of the deep pockets of his blue serge trousers, turned round, shrugged his shoulders, and set off homewards.

CHAPTER II.

"GOOD-EVENING, Captain! So you are talking to Zero. What do you want to say to him? He only speaks Dutch!" This question was asked of Captain Pigott by old Quartermaster Iver, whose duty it was to look after the lighthouse which stood at the entrance of the harbour.

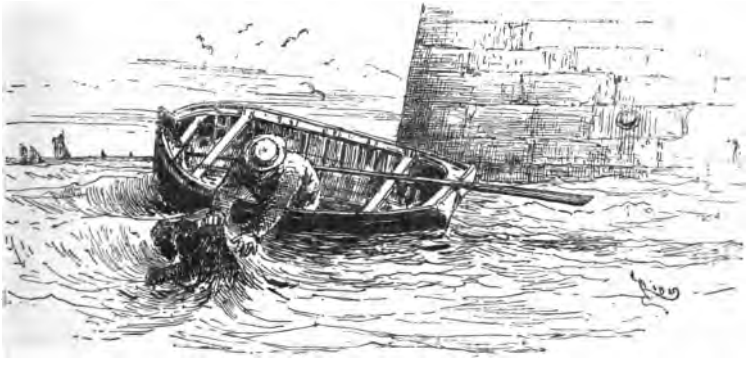
"Oh!" said the Captain, "so he's called Zero, is he? I am very glad to find he has such an appropriate name, for I think it just about expresses his value. I can't pay him any compliments on the score of politeness! I rescued him from a lot of rascals who wanted to drown him, and I gave him an invitation to supper, which he didn't accept; in fact, he didn't even reply," said the Captain, laughing.

"Well, I must admit he was wrong, and in his place I should not have done the same," said Iver; "but it

is because he is so faithful. He doesn't care for any one but his master."

"And who is his master?"

"A fellow named Norkind Van der Tromp, a sailor on board the *Queen Sophia*, a large Dutch ship, that came to take in cargo. Between ourselves, I don't think very much of him. He isn't a fool, but he's



HE SEIZED HIM BY THE SKIN OF THE NECK.

always drunk when he is ashore, though I don't know how he behaves at sea. He gives his dog more kicks than food; but in spite of this, the poor beast loves him all the same. You should see them together—the dog walks in his footsteps! He isn't handsome, I admit; but there never was a more clever animal. He can do as many tricks as a conjuror.

He will do whatever you tell him, and even more. The only thing he is *not* able to do is to speak, and he can almost do that. I am sure he understands Dutch, and Flemish too, for he never made a mistake when his master ordered him to do anything. He is very well known here, and his affection for Van der Tromp is wonderful. He seems to care for no one else, but would go through fire and water for him."

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," said Pigott, with a laugh; "at any rate, I don't know many men who are worth doing it for."

"You're right there. But look, Captain; why is he running up and down the quay like a lunatic?"

Pigott turned round, and saw Zero careering along the edge of the quay, stopping from time to time to look towards the sea, giving utterance to despairing howls, then beginning to run again, only to stop once more almost immediately, as if he could not really make up his mind once for all. At last, after two or three minutes' deliberation, Zero seemed to have decided what to do, for he took a short run, and with one bound jumped into the sea.

"I wish you joy," said the lighthouse-keeper, with a careless gesture. "If you think you can swim fast enough to catch the *Queen Sophia*, who, with a fair wind, makes twelve knots an hour, and who has al-

ready got twelve miles' start, you are mistaken, my boy. You will change your mind in five minutes, I'll warrant. But look, Captain; how the current is carrying him out to sea! When he wants to come back, he won't be able to. It's just as it was ten months ago, when those two poor fellows were drowned. However, it's all Norkind's fault for having left him behind; but it's a pity for the dog to risk his life for a drunkard who isn't worthy of it. Look! he is sinking,—no, he's still swimming. What strokes he takes! Ah! it is all over! He has disappeared! No; there he is again. He has as many lives as a cat. It makes me feel quite miserable to see him, and I would give five shillings to be able to throw him a rope. He is such a good sailor that I know he would catch hold of the end and get ashore again."

"Bless my heart, I don't want the poor dog to die," said the Captain; "I have saved men who weren't half as sensible as he is, and I will save him too, or we'll be drowned together."

Suiting the action to the word, and with an activity that one would not have expected in a man of his size and weight, Pigott jumped into a boat, and rowing with the vigour and skill of an accomplished oarsman, he quickly gained upon the distressed dog, went a few yards beyond him, and allowing his boat to be drifted

back by the current, just at the moment when Zero was disappearing for the third, and probably the last time, he seized him by the skin of his neck, raised him by a turn of his wrist, and placed him in the bottom of the boat, where the poor dog lay for some moments on his side, without moving—with the water that he had swallowed pouring from his mouth and nostrils.

Having done this, in less time than it takes to narrate, the Captain turned the boat round, and with a few vigorous strokes pulled to the quay. Iver, who was waiting for him, made the boat fast, and Pigott, always compassionate, took the still senseless dog into his arms and placed him with the utmost gentleness on the bank, just as if it had been a drowned man that he had rescued.

Zero had a certain characteristic energy in his temperament. As soon as he saw dry land again, he felt another man—or, I should say, another dog. He experienced a sudden and unexpected change within himself. The conduct of his late master appeared in its true light; he saw that he was not called upon to risk his life a third time for a wretch who had voluntarily abandoned him; and, besides, the sacrifice would be quite useless, for now he saw plainly that he would never be able to overtake the *Queen Sophia*. So he sat on his haunches, wrapped in profound

thought, in the position that an artist would give to a philosophical dog who knows men too well to take any heed of them, and who has already experienced too many of the ills of life ever to hope for happiness again. Doubtless he owed much to the kind stranger who had just rescued him from a watery grave; but even he probably thought that he had already done enough for him, and was now going to abandon him to his unhappy lot. It was clear, then, that in future he would be forced to become a vagabond dog, with every one's hand against him, without credentials, without bread or board, having no longer either hearth or home or prospect of supper at the Red Lion Inn, which state of things is almost as bad for a dog as for a man. These unpleasant thoughts necessarily made him very downcast, and his apprehensions were plainly to be read in his sorrowful countenance. Besides, he had a habit of hanging his lower lip, which made it impossible to doubt that his soul was full of bitter discouragement.

John Pigott watched him with an attention and an interest which astonished himself, but which he could not help. It almost seemed as if he knew all that was going on in Zero's mind and could read his inmost thoughts.

"Dear me!" he said to himself, "this is not a com-

mon dog. How funny it would be if he could write, or even tell me what he is thinking about! But there's seven o'clock striking, and my soup will be getting cold, and Jane will be cross; but I can't leave the poor fellow here, especially as he seems to have no one but me to care for him."

As the Captain finished this soliloquy, he turned towards the dog,—who had remained quite still, apparently absorbed in his own thoughts,—and, speaking to him as if he thought he could really understand, said:

"Come, old fellow! you see pretty plainly that your master has deserted you. Don't think any more about him, but come along with me;" and, as if wishing to show still more plainly what he meant, Pigott passed his handkerchief through Zero's collar, who this time allowed himself to be led away without resistance.

The Hill of Grace, at the foot of which Honfleur is built, is certainly one of the most charming situations on the beautiful banks of the river, which at each turn shows sketches of country well calculated to please the eye. Nowhere is a more extended view seen under more favourable circumstances; nowhere does the vegetation display more tropical luxuriance.

Born in the neighbourhood, and coming of a race of sailors, Pigott, during his many distant voyages, had

ZERO ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE LED AWAY.

complete the picture, and again beyond to the left, always new, yet always the same, the open sea,—the sea, without which it is impossible for any one to live who has in childhood played with its foaming mane, and who, when grown to manhood, has been for many years, sometimes in fair, sometimes in foul weather, borne to and fro over its heaving bosom.

John Pigott was still in his honeymoon as a landlord and householder; he had only been living in White Rock Villa (so he called his little house) for six months, busily occupied in grafting his roses, gathering his strawberries, watering his lettuces, and reading the paper. He had only one domestic, Jane, whose greatest merits were that she knew how to make his favourite dishes, served him with profound regard, and almost worshipped him.

"How late you are, sir!" said the girl, as she opened the door for the Captain. "Ten minutes past eight! I have been obliged to put the soup on the fire again, and it is cream-soup, so if it is spoiled it will be *your* fault, and not mine, sir."

"All right," said John Pigott. "If it is a little overdone it's my fault, but bring it quickly; I have run from the harbour, and am half starved."

"Very well," said Jane; but she added: "Whatever is it that you are leading behind you?"

"It is a friend of mine that I have asked to supper," said the Captain, with a laugh that fairly shook the house; "but run in, for you are keeping me standing on the doorstep, and the wind is so cold that it makes me shiver."

Jane stepped back, and the Captain entered, followed by Zero.

"Well! I can't say I think your friend very handsome," said the servant, who had a habit of speaking her mind to every one, and especially to her master.

"Perhaps so, but you will see that he is good; and, at any rate, in order to welcome him, you must make him something nice to eat."

"Upon my word, he needs it," she replied, looking at the dog, who, wet, dirty, and thin, looked the picture of misery.

But as she was not really bad-hearted, suffering always aroused her compassion, and her first impulse invariably caused her to go to the help of anything that was in need of assistance. She therefore at once prepared a bountiful meal for the new-comer.

Zero supped that night as he had not supped for many a long night. The house seemed to him delightful, and it was with him merely as a matter of form that the Captain fastened a chain round his neck

when he took him to his kennel. He had not the least desire to quit this hospitable roof.

It would be interesting to know what passed through the dog's mind, which was certainly wanting neither in intelligence nor feeling, but it would be impossible for any one to tell this with certainty, for Zero, naturally discreet, had become still more so since his misfortunes, and made no confidants. Perhaps, however, it is permissible for us to think that he ended by saying to himself that the choice could not be doubtful between one master who had deserted him and another who had saved his life, who cared for him, fed him, coaxed him, and loved him. So he transferred to the Captain all the wealth of affection which he had formerly bestowed upon his previous master; and that is saying a great deal!

And now a totally new life began for him. He altogether gave himself up to John Pigott, as servant and as friend. He used every means in his power to show his love and devotion to the owner of White Rock Villa, who was his owner too. He lived with him, never leaving him for a moment, with his eyes always fixed on those of his master as if watching his thoughts and trying to anticipate his wants in order to satisfy them. He accompanied him in all his walks, followed him wherever he went, and slept on a piece of

carpet at the foot of his bed. In all Europe, there was not a man who was better cared for than our friend the Captain. Even St. Roche and his dog, so celebrated in the legend, were not more inseparable.

But Zero's carefulness and attention did not end even here. He left no stone unturned in his efforts to show his wish to make himself useful and agreeable. He brought into the house the pocket-handkerchiefs that the careless Captain dropped here and there in the yard and in the garden; he watched to see that the outside gate was always shut, and showed a wonderful cleverness in the way in which he raised the handle and let it fall again so as to fasten the catch; he taught manners to the little boys who ventured to speak to his master without taking their hats off. He used to put a paw on each shoulder and gently but firmly take the offending hat from the head of the ill-mannered owner.

But even this was not all! He had noticed the pleasure with which the Captain read the newspaper every morning, which gave him all the latest news of the maritime affairs of Europe and America, and in order that he might have this pleasure a few minutes earlier, Zero used to go and wait for the newsboy at the bottom of the hill, and receiving from him the much-prized paper, returned with it to the house, tearing along as fast as his legs could carry him.

John Pigott, who had never before been made so much of, found it very pleasant to be so loved, even by a dog, and noticing and being much touched by the endless proofs of his boundless affection, he every day loved his friend, servant, and companion more and more.

This time was for Zero an almost ideal existence. He had never hoped for or dreamed of such perfect happiness as this, but, as the proverb says, "all that is pleasant soon passes away," and this, it seems, is true for dogs as well as men.

The Captain married, and of course Zero no longer occupied the first place in White Rock Villa or in his master's affections.

CHAPTER III.

THE newly married bride liked cats, but did not like dogs. Perhaps if the Captain's dog had seemed to her to be possessed of either elegance or beauty, he would have conquered her dislike, even if he did not deserve her esteem. But unfortunately this was not the case. The poor, ugly dog had neither shape nor breed, but only those wonderful mental qualities which are not seen all at once; a warm and loyal heart and marvellous intelligence. But these were not enough to gain the goodwill of his mistress that he so much desired. The poor dog had too much sagacity not to understand the state of affairs at once.

Zero was not a sycophant; he had the dignity of a hound, with the susceptibility of a spaniel. As soon as he was convinced that he was not properly appreciated by his new mistress (whom nevertheless he had at first wished to make much of, for he was naturally gallant),

he made it a point of honour not to trouble himself at all about her. In fact, he waited for this pretty, scornful woman to display a better and more just feeling towards him.

It will be easily understood that this state of things made it very difficult to take an altogether blameless course, but I doubt if many men, better educated though they doubtless might have been, would have extricated themselves better from such a delicate position. While preserving for his master the same affection (which he felt would only end with his life), he observed more discretion and reserve in displaying it. Up till now he had shown it very plainly, as is natural between two friends when there is no need to be afraid of any one. Every excuse then appeared to him good enough to enable him to show his true feelings towards him who was the object of his affections. But now, as if he understood that there was some one who had the right to be jealous, he restrained himself as much as possible. But whenever he was so fortunate as to be alone with his master, he revenged himself for the period of abstinence which had been so long imposed upon him, by the most extravagant display of affection.

This delicacy of perception did not escape Pigott; he saw the goodness of heart that prompted it, and was most profoundly touched, so on these occasions he

would caress the poor beast with a tenderness that made him happy for the rest of the day.

"If only my wife loved my dog," said Pigott, "all the retired captains would envy me, and perfectly contented, I should live happily with these two beings, without caring any more for the rest of the world than I do for the man in the moon."

But Eliza did *not* love Zero; of this fact it was impossible to have any doubt, and the man was not deceived any more than the dog.

In the interests of justice, we are obliged to admit that Zero did nothing to conciliate his enemy. If on the first arrival of Mrs. Pigott at White Rock Villa he had shown himself anxious to make every possible concession in order to live on good terms with her, on the other hand, when he saw that his advances were coldly received, he treated her as if she was an entire stranger, and did not seem to even notice her presence.

At this trying period of his life, Zero, who was rather fond of good living (every one has his faults, and perhaps this weakness was scarcely to be wondered at in a dog who suddenly finds himself well provided for after having been on short commons so long), had the misfortune to be exposed to temptation and succumb to it. This act caused him many and varied misfortunes.

Mrs. Pigott, who was rather dainty, was in the habit of breakfasting on two new-laid eggs, which a pair of crève-cœur hens laid every day, with a punctuality which is usual with well-conducted fowls.

It happened one day that Jane either thoughtlessly or clumsily dropped one of these eggs as she was

ZERO SMELT THE DELICIOUS ODOUR.

crossing the yard. Needless to say, the fragile shell was instantly broken on the pavement. But the egg was not wasted, for Zero, who was wandering about close by, smelt the delicious odour, and lapped it up in two mouthfuls, yolk, white, and all.

Thus Mrs. Pigott's breakfast was reduced by one half. Jane confessed her fault, and was graciously forgiven by her mistress, who promised not to allude to it again. But the feast had proved very much to our hero's taste. Next day, nothing would have pleased him better than to whet his appetite with just such another choice morsel. The fresh egg seemed to tickle his palate even better than a glass of vermouth or absinthe does that of a gourmet. Doubtless he hoped that a similar accident would bring him a repetition of his banquet. But such good luck could not always happen. To-day Jane did not make an omelette in the yard, and Zero's mouth watered for it in vain. He did not dare to ask for it, as he knew that Jane would only have laughed at him.

But as he was of a very observant disposition (as all dogs should be who want to get on in the world), he carefully watched the goings and comings of the servant, and it was not long before he noticed, that every time she brought the eggs into the house, she came out from a certain cellar, where the fowls, which were allowed to run about at will, were in the habit of laying, in two little boxes filled with hay, which were placed among the hogsheads and barrels. Taking advantage of a moment when she was not looking, our embryo robber cautiously followed her in, but too late!

she had already taken the eggs; he found the nests warm, but empty.

Of course he was greatly disappointed, but not a bit discouraged. Although he had not studied philosophy, he nevertheless had a natural talent for argument, and was well able to draw the logical results from any given premises. He said to himself that since he did not find any eggs in the cellar when Jane had been there before him, on the other hand, *she* would not find any if *he* went in first.

When a dog is able to reason as logically as this, it may safely be said that he is on the verge of a course of crime, and that the least thing will start him headlong on it.

Although he had been so long at sea, Zero was unable to tell the time by the sun, and not being able to obtain a chronometer at the watchmaker's, he disdained to make use of a common watch. But, in spite of this, he had methods of taking note of time, certain methods which would ensure his not being too late, so he next day anticipated Jane's visit to the cellar by about five minutes, and thought to himself that to-day *he* was the lucky first comer. He had no difficulty in finding the nest, or rather the nests, for there were two, which, as we have already seen, were two little boxes, made of twigs, lined with soft, sweet hay, on

which every morning the chickens were kind enough to deposit their mistress's breakfast.

Zero had at last reached the goal of his hopes! but at this moment something occurred to him, and which they say often happens to a thief when on the point of committing his first crime—he experienced in anticipation remorse for the wicked deed which he was about to commit. His conscience said to him, like that of Cæsar, at the moment when the future master of Rome was about to cross the Rubicon, "One step more will be a crime." A vision of punishment taking the shape of a formidable whip wielded by a terrible arm passed before his mind, and made a deep impression on him. A slight noise from outside was also a second warning, which he could not mistake. He went to the door of the cellar, and looked around him with his piercing eyes. Alas! he had no longer the look of an honest dog, which is the certain indication of an easy conscience. On the contrary, there was in the troubled glance of his eyes a restlessness and fearfulness that augured badly for the future of his virtue. It was, in fact, only too certain that from the moment that he turned his rare intelligence towards an evil course, Zero became a thorough rascal; a dog like him never takes the first step in a criminal course without pursuing it to the end.

Our robber (for such he already was in intention) saw nothing suspicious around him : the door of the kitchen was shut, and so was the gate of the garden, the yard was empty ; never had the occasion been more propitious for the commission with impunity of an attempt against the well-being of others. There are moments in life when everything seems to unite to extinguish in our minds every remnant of moral sense. Men know this as well as dogs.

Zero rushed back into the cellar with the haste of a malefactor, who feels that the time of hesitation is past, and that action is now necessary if he wishes to satisfy his passion. Besides, everything seemed to conspire in urging him on to commit this crime by stimulating his desire for his anticipated meal.

The two eggs were there, each in its box, snowy white, surrounded by fragrant hay, and so fresh that they were quite warm. Zero looked at them so intently that he almost seemed to taste them through their clean white shells. He appeared to consider again, but all at once a veil seemed to pass before his eyes, and the last glimmering of light that was shining in his conscience went out. He lost the power of distinguishing between good and evil, and perhaps a lawyer would say, he also lost all responsibility for his actions. He seized one of the eggs, which instantly

disappeared down his throat, the shell being broken by a single bite, and as he swallowed the juicy morsel he had the appearance of a gourmet, who has no need to be told what is good.

We all know that remorse quickly follows the commission of a crime. There were still some fragments of the shell sticking to his teeth, and like our first father, Adam, after he had eaten the fatal apple, our hero wished to hide himself. But even in the midst of his uneasiness there was one redeeming feature which should be noticed. Probably he said to himself that there are degrees of crime, as of virtue, and that it does not follow because one commits a single fault that the career of crime shall be continued to the bitter end all at once. Perhaps also he thought that having deprived his mistress of one half of her breakfast, it was only fair to leave her the other. So having devoured the first egg, Zero looked at the other with a glance in which desire and regret were touchingly mingled, but bearing in mind the wise maxim "The pitcher that goes oftenest to the well is sure to be broken at last," he tore himself away, and went to the harbour for a walk, in the hope of thereby assisting his digestion.

Jane had just returned from market, where she had been making some purchases. She looked at

the clock, which pointed to a quarter to eight, and therefore she knew that she had only fifteen minutes to lay the cloth and get breakfast ready. Punctual as the chronometer which the Captain used to have on board, Mrs. Pigott came downstairs to breakfast at eight, and if the eggs were not on the table to the minute, it put her out of temper for the rest of the day. She had a capricious appetite, which would not be kept waiting even ten seconds; in fact, she ruled her stomach by the clock. In other respects she was abstemious; a single glass of milk in addition to the two eggs already mentioned was sufficient to satisfy her until dinner, which was served at one o'clock, as is generally the case in the houses of the Norman peasantry, who still cling to the habits of their forefathers.

Jane therefore ran to the cellar to take from thence the two eggs. Needless to say, she found only one. She was greatly surprised, for it was just the time of the year when fowls usually lay best, and "Snowy" and "Smutty," who were well fed, did not usually fail in their duty. A total collapse of everything, or even an earthquake carrying the house away bodily and depositing it several miles off, would not have astonished her more. She could scarcely believe her eyes. She felt Snowy's nest, and found that it was

really empty. She raised and shook the fragrant hay, but could nowhere find another egg.

"It's very strange," she said, "and quite beyond my understanding; it is three months since such a thing happened. I know Snowy is quite well, because when I went to get the coals this morning I saw her on her nest. If one can't believe in fowls, what *can* one believe in? But that isn't the worst part of it. Whatever will my mistress say? She wasn't very pleased when I dropped that one two days ago."

Naturally, to-day Mrs. Pigott was still less pleased. She was a creature of habit, and was very fond of new-laid eggs. This time Jane had no excuse ready, so she was obliged to submit to a regular cross examination. But of course it was useless, for as she knew nothing about it, the poor girl was unable to give any explanation. All she could say was that she went to the cellar at the regular hour, but instead of finding two eggs, she found only one, and it was no use asking her any more questions.

"Well!" said Eliza, "it's a very strange thing, and one which I certainly should not have expected,—such well-fed chickens,—and just in the middle of the season, too. I can't make it out at all. But look here, Captain Pigott, instead of sitting there in that aggravating

way while I am wearing myself out with talking, I think *you* might say something."

"I think that would be rather difficult, for you don't give me much time to do so, my dear," replied the Captain mildly.

"Well! I've only had *one* egg to-day; what do you think of that?"

"I think that most likely the fowls are ill," said her husband quietly.

This reply did not satisfy Eliza, and she looked hard at her husband, to see if he was serious, or whether he was making fun of her. But on occasions like these the Captain's face was as difficult to read as that of the Sphinx, so Mrs. Pigott was again reduced to conjecture. However, she seemed to be in a thoroughly bad temper for the rest of the day.

"She will sleep it all off," said the Captain to himself, for he had not travelled so much without becoming possessed of a large amount of philosophy.

CHAPTER IV.

BUT Jane, who, as may be well supposed, was not over-anxious to expose herself to a repetition of to-day's scolding, took care to go earlier than usual to the cellar next morning; she wished to catch the fowls on their nests. But she was too late; a still earlier visitor had already been there. This time it was not only one egg that was missing, but both had mysteriously disappeared. Certainly Zero was becoming a confirmed thief, and the tide of his wickedness was rising fast.

"Oh! what shall I do?" said Jane; "two days running! What a commotion there will be. Yesterday it was only a breeze, to-day it will be a storm. I must try and find some way of sheltering myself from it."

She called to Zero.

Our friend had retired to his kennel, where he was

calmly digesting his ill-gotten meal, in the luxury of a sort of delicious, dreamy reverie. He fancied that the Captain had now a hundred hens, and that they laid eggs for him all day long.

Jane's voice rather startled him. He felt his conscience was not clear, and he was afraid she was going to ask for an explanation of his conduct. However, he put a bold face on it, and quietly walked up to the servant, although he was inwardly trembling for the future. But, without seeming to do so, he carefully watched her as he approached, and was soon reassured. A single glance convinced him that Jane had not the least suspicion of the truth.

"It's all right," thought the wretch; "she doesn't suspect anything."

He therefore looked at her more boldly, as if he was anxious to find out what she wanted so early.

"Listen, old fellow," she said, gently patting his shaggy head with her hand; "you must run an errand for me."

Zero for some time had been the messenger, in fact I might almost say the factotum, of White Rock Villa. He was always sent to bring the parcels from the various shops, and up till now he had brought them safely back to the house with the most praiseworthy regularity.

Jane therefore took a piece of paper, and with a special method of spelling which was her own invention, she wrote in a large, irregular, but perfectly legible hand these few words, which Zero, with his usual intelligence, was to carry to the shop, so as to save her a journey into the town : " *Too neu heggs if yew pleese.*"

Jane fastened the paper to a napkin, put the napkin in a little willow basket, whose handle was lined inside with cloth, added threepence in coppers, which she wrapped in a piece of an old newspaper, and then putting the handle of the basket between the dog's teeth :

" To the grocer's !" she said, pronouncing the words very slowly and distinctly.

The grocer, the tobacconist, and the post-office keeper were well-known persons to Zero, who was in constant and friendly relations with all three of them. His wonderful intelligence prevented his making a mistake, and he never went to one when he was intended to go to the other.

He set off at once, determined not to loiter on the way, feeling happy perhaps at the bottom of his heart, at being able, by being of some use, to efface the memory of the recently committed fault, which lay heavily on his heart—and his stomach.

The grocer, who was accustomed to seeing this strange messenger, who never said a word, politely asked him to enter, finished serving some other customers who had arrived before him,—for every one must be supplied in due order,—then looked at the paper, took the three coppers, chose two eggs from a box, held them up to the light to see if they were

HE TROTTED UP THE HILL AT A BRISK PACE.

fresh, placed them in the basket, covered them up with the cloth, and then, probably from force of habit, said to this new sort of customer:

"Anything else?"

Zero thought this question both foolish and ill-timed; he always knew perfectly well what he wanted,

asked for it at once, and did not trouble about the expense; but as he did not wish to be disagreeable, he kept his reflections to himself, turned his head towards home, like a conscientious servant (the race is very rare) who does not wish to lose any time when he knows he is expected by his master, and trotted up the hill at a brisk pace, but not too fast, for he knew only too well that eggs are brittle.

To entrust eggs to a dog who likes them so much is almost like tempting Providence. Although the note by means of which Jane had sent the message was open, Zero, who was discretion itself, had not thought it right to read it, so that he had not the least idea what he was going to fetch. But when he saw them being put into the basket, his mouth began to water, and a host of wicked thoughts rushed through his mind. His evil desires increased more and more as he mounted the hill, and the temptation to pretend that he had lost them grew greater every moment. The demon of gluttony whispered to him that perhaps Jane would not count the eggs, and then she would be quite satisfied if he brought only one of the two; and then the opportunity was so tempting, and the theft so easy. Were they not close to him, almost within reach of his teeth? He had only just to rest the basket on the ground and take them out. But

in spite of this, he still resisted, as if, like an honest dog, he understood that the confidence that had been placed in him must not be betrayed.

This victory over temptation shows that as yet he was not hopelessly bad; it was to be hoped that his good genius might even yet get the upper hand.

Jane, however, spared him much further temptation, for being rather uneasy at his non-arrival, and already being pressed for time, she came part of the way to meet him.

Carefully raising the napkin, and perceiving the two eggs, which the dog had brought quite safely, just as they had been given him, she was greatly delighted.

"Saved!" she cried. If she had been a little better educated, she would have added, in the regular theatrical style, "Thank God!"

But the poor girl was mistaken; she was not to get out of the scrape quite so easily! Mrs. Pigott, who had a very sensitive taste, had no sooner tasted the first mouthful of the first egg than she cried:

"These eggs have not been laid by my chickens!"

"Impossible!" said the Captain, most profoundly astonished.

"Perhaps it is impossible, but it is true."

"I must admit," said Pigott, "that your sense of taste is wonderfully acute."

"And do you wish to complain of it?" asked Mrs. Pigott, raising her voice in a way that showed a storm was imminent.

"You know, my dear, that I complain of nothing about you. I only admire the delicacy of your palate, which enables you to tell whether an egg is laid by one hen or another."

"And so that astonishes you?"

"Astonishment is a feeble word to express my sentiments," said Pigott, determined to concede more and more, and though this policy has often proved fatal to Governments, it nevertheless has often saved the peace of households. "Admiration is a much better word to describe my sentiments."

Eliza, on hearing these words, quickly raised her head, and looked hard at her husband with her piercing blue eyes. It was clear that she was not quite sure whether, in thus expressing himself, he was making fun of her, and wished to convince herself of his sincerity.

But even her most critical glance could discover nothing suspicious in the bluff and jovial face of our friend the Captain. So it was in a somewhat milder voice that she replied:

"Ah! it's all very well to talk, but I wish to ease my mind, and find out the true history of these eggs."

The Captain had gloomy forebodings, and would gladly have created a diversion in the mind of his better half, but he knew only too well how obstinate his wife was, and that if she once determined on a course of action, nothing would dissuade her from it. So he judged it prudent not to make the least objection, and calmly allowed things to take their course.

Eliza angrily rang a little hand-bell which was close by, and Jane shortly appeared in the doorway.

The violence of the peal had at once shown her that something serious was the matter, and it is only fair to her perception to say that she at once guessed that her mistress was about to inquire into the delicate question of the eggs. Nevertheless, as she preferred to wait the course of events rather than compromise herself by an incautious remark, she said nothing, but anxiously awaited her mistress's questions. She was not kept long in suspense.

This hasty young person was, in point of fact, not very skilful in controlling herself, and at once angrily endeavoured to solve the problem.

"Where did these eggs come from?" she asked, looking the servant through and through with her piercing eyes.

Jane was an honest girl who never told a lie when it would be either useless or certain to be detected.

"They came from the grocer, ma'am," she coolly replied.

"And for how long have you been in the habit of buying my eggs from the grocer?"

"Since we haven't had any at home."

"Ah! so there aren't any more eggs at home," said Eliza angrily; "then I should like to know what my hens are doing."

"You had better ask them, ma'am, for I can't tell you. All I know is that they don't lay any eggs."

"I am the most ill-used woman in all Honfleur!" said Eliza, nervously striking her little white hands one against the other.

"If you think so, ma'am," said Jane, pretending to untie the strings of her apron, "you have only to give a month's notice to me and the fowls."

This impertinent reply was the utmost limit to which the servant could go without risking an immediate rebuke. She thought it prudent to retire, so promptly executed a strategic movement to the rear.

Eliza was so upset, so utterly taken aback, that her husband for a moment feared that she was about to have an attack of hysterics; but he knew enough to be well aware that the best thing in such a case was to leave her entirely to herself, and not attempt to console or calm her. She was like a spirited horse,

which must not be allowed to feel the bit, for fear it should bear against it, in which case the resistance which it feels only makes it more frantic.

After a few minutes Mrs. Pigott rose from the table, pushed back her chair, threw her serviette into a corner, and went out of the dining-room, where she left her husband in great consternation, saying, "I'm not to be deceived like that! I wish to find out all about it, and to know who conspires against me in my own house."

Having decided to make a searching inquiry, which should throw any ordinary judicial investigation into the shade, the Captain's wife first of all went to visit the site of the supposed crime. This is always the first step in a criminal proceeding. She therefore turned her steps toward the cellar where from time immemorial the fowls had been in the habit of laying.

They were both there; one perched on a cask, was making the little satisfied clucking by which hens show that they have pretty recently laid; the other, on the contrary, was perched on a cross-beam, just below the rafters of the roof (she could not get any higher), and had a scared expression. Her comb was bloody, her feathers ruffled and torn; in fact, her whole appearance warranted the supposition that she had recently had a struggle with some enemy. Although

SHE COULD NOT GET ANY HIGHER.

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they were thoroughly accustomed to the sight of their mistress, and were usually so tame that they would peck crumbs of bread out of her hand, no sooner did Snowy and Smutty catch sight of her than they uttered frightened cries; then they tried to fly in the slow and heavy way which distinguishes the domestic hen.

"Well! this is very strange!" said Mrs. Pigott to herself. "Now I will have a look at the nests."

So she at once turned towards the two boxes. Here again she found traces of disorder. We well know the usual tidiness of a nest in which a hen has laid an egg: everything is as smooth as if a roller had been passed over it; to-day, on the contrary, the straw appeared tumbled and pulled about.

"That's not as it should be!" thought Mrs. Pigott. "I am quite sure now that the hens have laid, and some one has taken the eggs. The thief must be quite near here. Who is it? I must find out, catch him, and punish him."

Like all nervous people, Eliza was absolutely and entirely absorbed by the present idea, and governed by it to the exclusion of everything else. When she wished anything, she wished it so much that it was almost a necessity for her that it should happen. Nevertheless, she had the sense not to say a

word during the whole day of the subject which was absorbing her attention. She meditated deeply on her plans, and ended by deciding on a course which seemed to her most likely to have the desired effect; but at present there was simply nothing to be done. The hens only laid in the morning, and therefore the robbers stole the eggs at that time; so in the morning she would have to be wide awake—and to act.

Mrs. Pigott was usually a light sleeper. Being of a somewhat restless disposition, the slightest unusual sound in the house awoke her instantly. No treasure could have had a more watchful guardian. But to-night she slept even less than usual. She rose with the dawn, dressed herself quickly and quietly, so as not to wake the Captain, who was wrapped in a deep sleep, and went out of the room.

She went downstairs, and made a careful inspection of the rooms on the ground-floor, and finding nothing suspicious there, she next went out into the yard and the garden. All the doors were shut; there were no suspicious signs anywhere; she examined with no less attention the paths, which were covered with a sort of grey sand, brought from the banks of the river, and which would have showed any footprints distinctly. Neither the yard nor the garden gave any appearance of an enemy from without. There was no longer any

doubt of it,—she was the victim of a domestic robbery,—the culprit in this case would be very easy to find, since she had him close at hand, and he could not escape. It must be confessed that for a moment the thought that Jane was the thief presented itself to Mrs. Pigott's suspicious mind; but she at once dismissed it. Jane was honest, incapable of a wicked action. And had she not all the keys? could she not take anything she liked out of the house? and was she not fed just as her master and mistress were?

"What a fool I am!" said Mrs. Pigott to herself, shrugging her shoulders; "it's clear that the robber is a rat. I'll buy a trap and catch it! Some dogs are very clever at killing them, but ours is such a fool, and so lazy that I am sure *he* won't be any use to me in this case."

In going her rounds Eliza had passed in front of Zero's kennel. Our hero had observed her, but seeing that she was the mistress of the house, free to come and go as she liked, he had considered that any hostile demonstration would be altogether unnecessary. If Mrs. Pigott had been on good terms with him, he would have gone to meet her, for he was never chained up—to show how surprised and pleased he was to see her up so early; but he was not by nature a sycophant, and was not inclined to make any more

advances, when the first had been so ungraciously received. So he soon closed his bright, wicked eyes again, and after having stretched himself, and indulged in a good yawn, he lay down again on his clean straw, chuckling to himself that he had time for another sleep.

But Eliza had gone to sit in the dining-room, which looked cold and uncomfortable in the grey dawn, but which she preferred to the drawing-room because from it she could better observe what was going on in the house. She took up her work, for she knew the value of time, and never lost a moment; so she carefully threaded her needle, and awaited the course of events.

At half-past six Jane came downstairs. She did not seem at all surprised at seeing her mistress down so early—she was never surprised at anything,—but asked for her orders, and then took her basket and went into the town, for it was market-day. Eliza continued to work at a patchwork quilt that she had begun the day after her marriage, and which was intended for her bedroom, but it seemed likely to take her ten years to finish, it was so elaborate and complicated. But although she worked industriously, she often glanced up to look into the yard, and above all watched the door of the cellar,—the sup-

posed theatre of the drama that she expected would soon be performed, and which interested her so much, —so as to be ready to rush to the assistance of Snowy or Smutty, as soon as they uttered the first cry of alarm.

A little before seven her attention was attracted by a slight noise in the yard. She looked up, and saw Zero, who had quietly come out of his kennel, and was cautiously going towards the cellar.

A terrible suspicion took possession of her, like a flash of lightning, and formed itself into these accusing words which escaped from her closed lips.

"Ah! the wretch! So he's the thief! I will go and catch him in the very act!"

CHAPTER V.

BEING of an impetuous character, impatient by nature, and having great difficulty in restraining herself, Eliza rose, or rather bounced, from her chair, intending at once to follow in the footsteps of the dog. But she stopped to consider, and thought to herself, that if she arrived upon the scene too quickly, she would only prevent Zero from furnishing the proof of his own crime; so that it would be better to wait a little in order to see to what extent he was guilty, and by catching him red-handed, prevent the possibility of his pleading innocence.

She therefore waited a few minutes longer in the dining-room, and then, holding her breath and walking on tiptoe, she cautiously went to the door of the cellar. But this canine Jack Sheppard, who really eemed as if he had more cunning than a human

being, had taken the precaution of shutting the door, so that he might the more safely commit the theft.

Unfortunately for him, however, he had not been able to close the cracks in the door, which being very old, was beginning to fall to pieces. These cracks were the means of ruining him.

Eliza was therefore able easily to look through them, and a strange spectacle met her indignant eyes.

Zero squatting flat on the ground, with his hind legs folded under him, his long tail quivering with pleasure and beating the floor, was holding poor Snowy motionless between his fore paws.

Eliza could scarcely keep herself from opening the door. She would have liked to catch the culprit, which she could easily have done, and have inflicted summary punishment upon him for his misdeeds. But curiosity, stronger even than anger, kept her standing for a moment longer on the threshold.

She had not long to wait.

Zero was waiting for the egg; he even assisted Snowy in laying it, and then eagerly devoured it, quite warm. A blow from his teeth broke the shell, which in its turn was devoured as a second course.

Mrs. Pigott was perfectly furious, and with good reason. But it must be confessed that her anger was

not altogether unmixed with satisfaction. She was of course enraged at the thought that to-day she was again deprived of her fresh eggs. But since there *was* a thief, she was delighted to be able to say that the thief was this wretched dog, which she had always hated, even before she knew that he deserved it. Her hatred of him now had a certain amount of justice in it.

She would have liked, without even the pretence of a trial, to have inflicted summary punishment upon the offender, and to have allowed him to explain afterwards. But Zero, who was a physiognomist, probably saw this kind intention in his mistress' eyes; for on perceiving her, he at once displayed a great desire to get out of the cellar. He rushed through the door which his mistress had just half opened, and finding the yard gate shut, ran into the kitchen, and from thence jumped into the street through the window, to the great astonishment of Jane, who was just returning from market, and who did not understand such extraordinary proceedings. Once outside, he rushed off without waiting to explain, and ran down the hill as fast as his legs could carry him.

Since Captain Pigott had retired from business and active life (perhaps rather prematurely), being con-

demned while still in vigorous health to lead an idle life, for which he was not suited, he found the time hang heavily on his hands, and was in the habit of retiring as early and rising as late as possible. Besides, he had an easy conscience and an excellent digestion,

ZERO JUMPED THROUGH THE WINDOW.

which always ensured him a sound sleep. He took advantage of this, and kept in bed as long as he could.

Eliza, who had all the qualities of a good housewife, generally left him to take his ease, and took care that

everything was in order when he thought proper to appear. But this morning she had too many things to tell him to allow him to get off quite so easily. She must give full vent to the anger that had been raised in her by the discovery of Zero's crime, and the fact of his being still unpunished made her feel rather spiteful.

She entered the room in a rage, slammed the door, and upset an armchair and a can of water that were in her way. The sleeper instantly awoke; he only half-opened one eye, but this was enough to enable him to see his wife, and he at once perceived from the expression of her face, that a storm was brewing. He imitated Zero, pretending that he had seen nothing, closed his eyes, and appeared to be still sleeping. But Eliza was not deceived by this little trick. She had noticed the quivering of her husband's eyelids, and had seen a faint glimmer of light in the pupil of his eyes. This was enough to enable her to detect the deception, and consequently it was useless.

"He is afraid," she thought, "and will do all I want!"

She approached the bed, and without giving him time to collect himself, placed one of her hands on his shoulder.

"Come! wake up!" she said to him. "You have

slept quite long enough; you have been asleep nearly twenty-four hours. Try and listen to me; I have something very important to say to you."

"Can't you put it off till eight o'clock?"

"No!"

John Pigott saw that it would be useless to try and avoid the dreaded scene with his wife at a moment when flight was absolutely impossible. He raised himself a little, put his elbow on the pillow, and rested his head on his hand, with an air of resignation.

"Well!" he said; "go on, I'm listening."

"I have found out who it is that steals my eggs."

"Ah! but are you quite sure? Then we must try and catch him."

"Trust me for that. But he has run away."

"Do you know who he is?"

"I should think I do!"

"Then you must tell the police! Would you like me to put the case in the hands of a lawyer?"

"I don't think we need trouble them," said Eliza, fixedly regarding her husband, not knowing if he was serious, or whether he was making fun of her; "if you like, you alone will be quite able to see that justice is done."

"Certainly I should like to do so! But tell me how! First of all, what is the name of the thief?"

"The thief is your dog!" replied Mrs. Pigott, with an air of conviction that it was impossible to doubt.

"Zero?"

"Just so."

"Zero a thief? Well, I can't believe it. It is impossible! You must have been mistaken. What could he want to do with your eggs? Do you think he wanted to sell them at the market?"

"No; he eats them."

"He eats them!" repeated Pigott, like an echo; "and how does he like them cooked, pray? As an omelette, or poached or boiled—perhaps he likes them scrambled!"

Eliza's eyes flashed and her lips quivered.

"I tell you, Mr. Pigott, that these jokes seem to me both rude and untimely," she said in a harsh voice that her husband did not like. "When I take the interests of our establishment so much to heart, I think I deserve to find in you something more than joking or indifference."

Pigott loved his wife too well to wish really to vex her. He thought it would not be advisable to continue this little war of words, of which he knew he would have to pay the costs when the treaty was signed. He therefore made a prudent retreat, and gravely replied,—

"So you are quite sure that it really is Zero who eats your eggs, and has them for breakfast instead of you?"

"Yes! because I saw him do it," said she, and then proceeded to describe the little scene which she had observed shortly before, hidden by the cellar door which allowed her to see it all without being discovered by the culprit.

But, to the great astonishment of his wife, the Captain during the recital betrayed neither anger nor indignation. On the contrary, he seemed rather to admire the cleverness that his dog had displayed.

"I knew," he said, "that that rascal Zero was clever, but I had no idea he was so clever as all that!"

This praise of the thief in the mouth of one to whom she had been denouncing Zero's wickedness, in the hope of obtaining summary punishment for him, fairly exasperated Mrs. Pigott. Patience was not her principal virtue, and she soon exhausted the small stock of this precious gift which Heaven had bestowed upon her.

In such a case her invariable course was to burst into tears.

"Well!" she cried; "I believe you are only too delighted when anything occurs that you think will annoy me."

"My darling, how can you say so?"

"If it wasn't so, you wouldn't persist, in spite of my requests,—in keeping near you,—at our house, between us——"

"There is nothing, and never shall be anything, *between* us; you may be sure of that, Eliza!" said the Captain earnestly.

"Yes, *between us*," replied the young wife with energy; "a wretched dog, ugly, almost deformed, a mongrel."

"Well, that isn't his fault; you must blame his parents."

"A dog which has nothing but faults."

"I beg your pardon, my dear; poor old Zero at least possesses one good quality."

"What?"

"The best of all, in my opinion."

"What do you mean?"

"He loves me!"

"All dogs love their masters."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it. You might have another who would love you quite as much, perhaps even more. He should be young, pretty, obedient—and he would not eat my eggs!"

When Eliza was once started it was difficult to stop

her. The Captain was well aware of this, and like a wise man he allowed her to run on without endeavouring to contradict her.

The young wife took advantage of the opportunity thus given, to make a long series of accusations against Zero, in which she endeavoured to expose all the crimes and shortcomings of her enemy. She was not contented with speaking of what he had done, but proceeded to enlarge on what he was going to do now that he had once commenced a career as a thief, in which dogs run to as great a length as men, and said, that for her part, she should never have a moment's peace until he was got rid of.

And all this was said in the manner in which women are so skilled, alternating between passion and gentleness, sometimes with angry exclamations, and sometimes with irresistible coaxing, and in a voice which appeared to harmonize equally well with either reproaches or tearful entreaties.

We must say in justice to the Captain, that even in the face of this vigorous attack, he for a long time resisted without losing a foot, continuing valiantly to defend his comrade. But his defence grew weaker and weaker, like that of a lawyer who has been retained to defend a client whom he knows to be guilty, and being hopeless of obtaining an acquittal,

thinks himself lucky if he secures a recommendation to mercy.

Eliza was too sharp not to perceive that she was gaining ground little by little, but she had too much tact not to take advantage of these first signs of weakness; she therefore brought out her reserve forces.

"Ah!" she cried, wiping away a tear which came into her eye just at the right moment, "I see that you don't care for me as much as you used to do —or perhaps you have never cared for me at all! Haven't you humiliated me enough—haven't you made me miserable enough—by preferring a dog to me! And now you want to sacrifice me to a wretched cur—a miserable mongrel—and we have only been married six months!"

"Eliza, how can you talk like that!"

"Stop! I hate your dog! I hate, I loathe him! and yet you force me to keep him, to see him every day —to live with him; and perhaps one day—I know it will be so—you will want to send me away altogether!" she cried passionately.

Here Mrs. Pigott stopped, as if her feelings were altogether too much for her, and it was impossible for her to say more. She therefore took refuge in tears; but her grief, which was only the result of

HE THEREFORE HALF ROSE IN HIS BED.

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excitement, was not sufficiently deep to spoil her good looks; and as the tears slowly coursed down her cheeks, they looked so like pearls that the Captain almost felt tempted to believe that they were such.

Like all men who have spent the greater part of their energy in the struggle of life, the Captain had not a great supply left for these little domestic scenes. He therefore half rose in his bed, and said gently,—

"You know, Eliza, that you can always make me do just what you like."

CHAPTER VI.

TO-DAY breakfast at White Rock Villa was a very pleasant meal, although somewhat later than usual. Zero's name was not even mentioned. Both husband and wife seemed in a very good humour. Mrs. Pigott did not find fault with the eggs, although they had been obtained from the grocer. On the other hand, the Captain redoubled his usual kindness and attention, in endeavouring to make her forget the disagreeable occurrence of the morning, which he assured her, on his honour, should not happen again.

But in spite of this, every time that the dining-room door was open, the Captain threw a furtive glance into the kitchen, as if he expected to see his dog return. It is true that the poor fellow hardly ever came into the room, from which his mistress's

unkindness had gradually driven him; but you might be pretty sure that at breakfast-time he would not be far off. He had even chosen, with the discernment which always distinguished him, a place in the kitchen from whence he could see his master.

Knowing as the Captain did the habits of dogs in general, and Zero in particular, he was quite sure that the intelligent animal, frightened by the angry glance of his mistress which he had met just at the most unfortunate moment, had been well aware of the enormity of his crime, and judging it prudent to allow some time to pass in the hope that he might be forgotten, did not yet dare to come and ask for forgiveness.

Pigott was quite sure of this, because Zero was not in the habit of absenting himself at meal times, when he generally got some scraps given him; so that he knew that a guilty conscience was keeping him away. But feeling that he was being watched, he tried not to show how absorbed he was in contemplating this subject.

As soon as breakfast was over, Eliza approached her husband, and as if she wished to strike while the iron was hot, said,—

"Now, aren't you going to see about that dog?" at the same time gently pinching his ear, a mark of

affection which the Captain, who was not often made much of, seemed to appreciate.

"I have promised," he said, somewhat sadly.

"Yes; but I want you to promise again," she replied, looking into his eyes. "I know he will dislike me more than ever now; and I shall never have a moment's peace while he stops here."

"You wrong him," said the Captain, slightly shrugging his shoulders. "I assure you the poor fellow wouldn't hurt any one—least of all you. If you had only taken a little trouble with him," he added, "you might have made him as obedient as I am."

Eliza did not wish to question this assertion, and being anxious not to commit herself, pretended that she had not understood him.

Pigott now perceived that his only course was to fulfil his promise. He took his hat, without exactly knowing what he was going to do, put his hands deep down into the pockets of his blue pilot coat, and went down the hill with its magnificent avenue of elms and beeches, towards the harbour. Sailor like, in moments of perplexity he always went there when he felt troubled or worried.

He had not gone a hundred yards under these fine old trees, with their spreading branches, before Zero, who was prowling about on the sidewalk, saw him,

and coming up to him ran against his legs with such violence that he nearly threw him down; but he suddenly stopped in the middle of this somewhat embarrassing exhibition of affection, and looked behind him, as if to make sure that he was not

ZERO JUMPED UP ALMOST TO THE CAPTAIN'S FACE.

followed. Then, as soon as he was sure that they were really alone, he again began his exuberant expressions of joy, running round and round the Captain, jumping almost up to his face, and gently licking his hands.

"Ah, poor old fellow!" said Pigott, gently patting his head, "we had better make as much of each other as we can now, for it will be a long time before we shall meet again."

It almost seemed as if Zero understood these words, for the expression of his face totally changed, and he seemed to become quite another dog. He looked wistfully at his master, as if he wanted to find out what was going to happen.

"Come along, since you are here," said the Captain to him; "but I warn you that it would have been better for both of us if you had not met me this morning."

The dog hung his head and slowly followed at his master's heels. He evidently feared that some evil was about to overtake him.

We have already said that the Captain was going towards the harbour. Zero had for a long time lived in this neighbourhood with Norkind Van der Tromp, on board the *Queen Sophia;* but as this part of the town had only gloomy recollections for him, he had never revisited it. He looked at the boats with a distrustful eye. He had never suffered from sea-sickness, but for all that he had not altogether pleasant memories of his voyages. He had gone on short commons when he was afloat, the sailor's

dinner had seemed to him very meagre, and he always regretted that he was unable to make the additions to it which, when on shore, his intelligence enabled him somehow or other to procure.

But the Captain walked quickly, like a man who, having a distasteful task to perform, wishes to get it over as quickly as possible.

From time to time he turned to see if his dog was still following him, a precaution which under ordinary circumstances would have appeared needless to him, since it was impossible for Zero to lose his way; but apparently he already felt remorse for what he was about to do, and was ashamed to exhibit proofs of an affection which under existing circumstances would look very like hypocrisy, for he no longer showed the freedom and familiarity which was usually the chief charm in their friendship for each other.

Zero was rather hurt by this reserve, as of course he did not know the motives which prompted it. It seemed to him that now there was no one to hinder it, his master might have set matters on their old footing, and be a little more demonstrative. But, like the well-conducted dog that he was, he kept his thoughts to himself, and followed the Captain.

The latter, leaving on his right the minor basin, where the ships came alongside the quay to take

in or discharge cargo, bent his steps towards the outer harbour, where lay three or four boats which were just about to leave port. Amongst these last was one which, having everything on board, was already making fast the hawser, which it was to be towed out by.

John Pigott went on board. It was quite unnecessary for him, in order to make sure that it was the one he wanted, to read its name, the *John Hampden*, which was painted on her stern in great red letters on a white ground. Her build, masts, and rigging, of which no detail escaped his sailor's eye, would have enabled him to tell her amongst a thousand.

He slowly stepped over her bulwarks, which only came about three feet above the quay, and then turned towards his dog. Under ordinary circumstances, such a trifling obstacle would not have stopped Zero for long; he would have jumped over it with a joyous bound, and soon have caught his master up. But to-day it seemed as if he would have to be dragged over. He had not dared to run away, although he had wanted to do so; but dreading some impending evil, he remained quietly seated on his haunches, in a melancholy attitude, and looked listlessly around him, waiting for orders. He seemed to think that his master had gone to make

a call, and that there was no need for him to follow, since he was not invited to do so.

The Captain knew his dog too well not to guess what was passing in his mind. He therefore understood his air of preoccupation, his anxieties, and his fears. He could not doubt that the poor brute perfectly understood why he returned for him, and the thought made his heart bleed.

"If he only obeyed his instinct," he said to himself, "he would run home as fast as he could. He only stops here in order to be faithful to the last—perhaps even till death."

But he had not come so far to change his mind at last. Besides, he had given his word, and if he did not do it to-day, he would be forced to do it to-morrow, so that it would be all the same in the end.

"Come here, Zero!" he said in a commanding voice.

The dog got up, climbed slowly over the bulwark, and came up to his master.

"Lie down!" said Pigott, who could scarcely bear to look at him, much less caress him, for a caress at such a time would have seemed to him as hateful as treason.

The dog fixed his large, soft eyes upon him with a glance that seemed to say, "You called me, and here I am; what is going to happen?"

"Lie down!" repeated John Pigott for the second time, making a motion with his hand which gave the dog to understand that he was not to move till ordered.

Zero turned round twice, as if looking for a suitable place; then he lay down, shut one eye, opened the other, and waited.

"It is better so!" said the Captain to himself; "I was afraid that we should have had a scene, and a scene is always useless, and would have made it still harder."

The captain of the *John Hampden* was standing on the bridge, superintending the last preparations that were being made for his departure. Like Pigott he was a regular sea dog. In their younger days they had sailed together. But Tantin had not made his fortune so quickly as Pigott, and the former was still obliged to work when the latter was able to retire. But in spite of this they were still excellent friends, and it was always a pleasure to them to meet.

"Good morning, old fellow!" said Tantin, holding out his hand to Pigott. "What good wind brings you here?"

"I want you to do me a favour."

"Well, I grant it! But speak quick, we must be off."

"I want you to take a passenger."

"Yourself?"

"No; a friend."

"You know where we are bound for?"

"Yes; for Senegal."

"Just so! Then I suppose your friend wishes to go there?"

"Yes; that is, no!"

"Yes! No! Which do you mean?"

"Well, he doesn't exactly want to make such a long voyage; but he must do it."

"Ah! I understand: it is a wild young fellow, who is being sent abroad because he can't behave himself at home."

"No," replied Pigott quickly; "on the contrary, he is a very good fellow, but unfortunately he is the cause of great dissension in the family."

"Between his father and mother?"

"Not exactly, but between husband and wife, and he is being sacrificed for the sake of peace and quietness."

"Poor fellow!"

"Yes; he has good ground for complaint, and I want you to promise to be kind to him."

"Of course I will! But, I warn you that our larder is not over well supplied. I did not expect to

have any passengers, and as you know well enough, our ordinary bill of fare is not very luxurious."

"That is a detail which doesn't trouble me much. The individual in question is not difficult to please."

"So much the better! But go and find him, I suppose he is close by; we shall start in five minutes. No one knows better that you do what an inconvenient harbour this is. If I don't take advantage of the tide to go out by, I shall have to be towed right to the sea; so run and fetch him as quickly as you can."

"There is no need to do that, the passenger is already on board."

"Why, I only saw you when you came here!"

"And my dog!" said Pigott, laughing.

"What joke are you trying to play upon me now?'

"No joke at all! He is the passenger that I have brought you."

"Oh! but I can't take him!"

In eloquent terms, for he really felt what he said, the Captain told the history of his dog, and of his wife. They were so thoroughly mixed up that it was impossible to separate them. He recounted how he had saved Zero, and how he had loved him. He depicted the great affection that his dog had for him, and did not conceal his wife's antipathy

to Zero. It had become impossible for the three to live together, so that poor Zero must be turned out.

"It's always like that!" said Tantin, with a loud laugh; "it is always like that when, at our age, a man marries a young woman. It is better to grow grey together; perhaps it is not so pleasant, but it is safer."

"Perhaps so!" replied Pigott somewhat brusquely, "but what is done is done, and there is no more to be said. The dog must go away; but although I shall be separated from him, I shall never cease to love him. He is good, affectionate, and intelligent; it cuts me to the heart to part with him; and I should be more miserable still, if I knew he was unhappy. I have come to offer him to you. Will you have him? I want to make a present of him to you. He will love you and serve you as you have never been loved or served—by a dog."

"All right!" said Tantin, "the thing's settled. I'll take him, and we will go and see Senegal together. The voyage is a long one, and we shall have time to get to know each other. When we get back I shall send him to my house. My wife likes dogs; and if yours has not shown him much kindness, he won't have anything to complain of with us. Of course you understand that I shall take every care of him.

But now you must go, for if you stop here five minutes longer, instead of taking one passenger I shall have two."

"I'm off! But one word more: I am going to make him go down into the hold. Shut him up, and don't let him out until you are out of sight of land; otherwise he will jump overboard, and we shall have gained nothing."

"All right! I won't let him out this side of Finisterre; but be off, the water is falling every minute, and you will make me miss the tide."

Pigott slowly went down from the bridge, and approached his dog.

"Come here, Zero," he said.

Zero thought that they were going ashore again. He jumped up as if he had been shot out of a catapult, and at the risk of upsetting everything near him, but without upsetting anything, he began to run round and round the Captain like one possessed. Pigott quieted him with a single word and gesture of command, and the dog instantly came and stood behind him. You would have almost said he knew he was to be sent away and wished to make himself regretted by his owner.

At this moment Eliza's husband, who was compelled by force of circumstances to behave like an

artful man, who does not tell all his thoughts, took his handkerchief from his pocket, folded it crosswise, and made it into a knot; then, having shown it to Zero, he threw it into the hold, saying, "Fetch!"

Zero was not usually behindhand at these games. He rushed after the handkerchief, jumped on to a pile of sacks, then on to some barrels of salt herrings, and poked his head between two casks of butter to where the handkerchief had rolled.

But while he was doing his best to show his intelligent obedience and the pleasure with which he executed his master's commands, at a sign from Pigott a sailor replaced the plank which shut the hatchway, and Zero found himself a prisoner, not on parole, but behind a very substantial enclosure. He did not quite understand it at first, but seeing that he was shut in he gave two or three loud barks, as if asking to be let out. Then, as no one offered to let him out, he angrily threw himself against the obstacle that had been opposed to his egress, trying either to push it open or break it. But the ship was as solid in every detail as she was in her hull, and nothing gave way. Then Zero understood how he had been caught, and his sorrow found vent in a pitiable howl. This cry, which sounded almost like a human voice, struck on the ear of John Pigott just at the moment when,

having taken his last farewell of the captain of the *John Hampden*, he was stepping on to the quay.

It entered into his very soul, like the dying groans of a friend who was calling for his assistance.

Instinctively, and without thinking what he was doing, Pigott stopped. It seemed as if his feet were riveted to the ground. It was plain that he still hesitated; but he appeared to be ashamed of this weakness, and with a firm step, and without again turning his head, he wended his way up the hill at a brisk pace towards his home, where he knew they would be waiting dinner for him. About half-way between the harbour and his house there was, between the trees, a small clearing, carefully kept, so that any one walking along the road might be able to get a momentary glimpse of the sea.

Pigott often stopped there, and he did so now, and looked down before him.

The *John Hampden* having let go the hawser by which she had been towed out of the harbour, borne along by the tide, her sails filled by a favourable breeze, her bow pointing towards the sea, was now making about ten knots an hour.

"Well, it's all over," said the Captain to himself. "Eliza will be happy now; but I feel miserable. Poor brute! How he howled when he found that I

PIGOTT STOPPED AND LOOKED DOWN BEFORE HIM.

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was leaving the ship. I think I shall have that cry ringing in my ears for many a day. Upon my word it quite unmans me—and there is a tear in my eye—the idea of crying for a dog!"

He took out his watch and looked at the time; it was ten minutes to one, and dinner was at one o'clock. He shook himself, passed his sleeve before his eyes—poor Zero had not brought him back his handkerchief, and with good reason—and slowly continued his walk towards White Rock Villa.

CHAPTER VII.

ON arriving at his house, Pigott found the cloth laid and everything ready for dinner; his wife was sitting at her work in the dining-room, employing herself till he came in.

His first look was at the clock, which pointed to a minute past one.

"I think the clock is rather fast," said he, as if he felt he was in fault, and wanted to defend himself even before he was attacked.

"I don't think so," replied his wife somewhat mischievously. "It goes like the church clock, which goes like that of the town hall, which goes like the sun. It is kept in order by a clockmaker from Honfleur."

"The sun is?"

"No, you silly man; our clock. I expected to have to wait, and I have not been obliged to do so: there-

fore it's all right. Only," she added, looking narrowly at her husband with her clear blue eyes, "I should like to know how you have spent the day."

"You should say the morning."

"Well, we won't cavil about words. You went out after breakfast, and since then we have not seen anything of you."

"Have I really been away as long as that?"

"That reply shows me that the time has not appeared so long to you as it has to me, but it doesn't tell me what you have been doing."

"What I have been doing?"

"Yes."

"Never mind; I can't bear to speak of it, and I only wish I had the power to forget it."

"Ah! you have been doing something that you don't dare to talk about, that you would like to forget!" said the young woman, with flashing eyes. "Take care, John!"

Pigott smiled at this menace, which did not frighten him, and in his heart of hearts felt rather flattered. Men are so vain, that they are always looking out for something to flatter their self love, and such a little thing will suffice, that they invariably succeed.

"I have sent Zero away," he said shortly. "The house is now rid of the presence of your enemy, and

you will have fresh eggs for breakfast to-morrow, if the hens lay any. You see that his trial did not last long."

Delighted with the victory that she had gained, Mrs. Pigott became very amiable, and Pigott on his part, not to be outdone, did his best to sustain the conversation as well as he could. But it must be confessed that he did not succeed very well. He listened to his wife; but it was his dog that he heard,—Zero's cry at the moment that he left the ship still resounded in his ears.

Besides, everywhere he saw something that reminded him of the exile.

Every time that the door of the kitchen was opened, and he saw the piece of carpet on which Zero used to lie, and which had not yet been taken away, he felt a vague uneasiness. The poor animal's name was not once pronounced by him; but although he did not speak, he thought much about him.

Eliza—who at heart, apart from her hasty outbursts, was not a bad woman, and who had besides a sincere affection for her husband—could not shut her eyes to his grief. At first, she seemed vexed by it, and reproached him for being so bound up in a dog when he had a wife; but when she saw that this only increased his sadness, and did not alter his good temper or cause him to cease to show towards her the same

delicate thoughtfulness and attention which he had previously exhibited, she appeared to feel something very like remorse.

She reproached herself for having deprived her husband of a companion to whom he had good reason to be attached.

The Captain was not slow to perceive the effect which these thoughts produced in her, and seeing that his wife was in a gentler and more amiable mood, for some moments (we are obliged to confess it) he completely forgot his dog.

But every now and then the remembrance of him came back all at once with wonderful power. At such moments he asked himself where Zero was, what had become of him, how he was treated; if he was unhappy; and (reader, you will not laugh if you have a dog) whether he still thought of him! He was desirous of concealing these speculations from his wife, but sometimes, in spite of his efforts, she read his thoughts in his anxious face.

As she did not wish her husband to be always brooding over this subject, Eliza never spoke of Zero; but, curious to relate, she thought almost as much about him as her husband did.

"I shall be obliged to go to Cherbourg in six months' time," said the Captain to himself; "and I will go from

there to Isigny, and make a little voyage as far as Grandchamp, so as to see him again."

As his friend Tantin rather prided himself on keeping his word, Captain Pigott felt quite certain that he

PIGOTT OPENED THE LETTER.

would soon receive the letter he had promised to send him, and which he so anxiously expected.

At last, one fine day, it came, being brought by the morning post which was delivered soon after breakfast. He had no occasion to look twice at the address, to re-

cognise the large, sprawling hand of Captain Tantin. The St. Louis stamp told him that the travellers had arrived at their destination. He put the letter in his pocket, so as to read it quietly a little later on, when he could be sure that no one would come to interrupt or worry him. Eliza had not noticed the arrival of the postman.

The Captain stopped a few minutes longer to talk carelessly of one thing or another with his wife, then he lit his pipe and went to smoke in the open air, as was his usual habit after a meal.

As soon as he had walked half way up the hill, he turned to one side under the shade of some tall trees, and went toward the cliff. He came to a rustic seat made of a piece of rock covered with moss, where he had seated himself to watch the departure of the *John Hampden* on the day that Zero had been carried away in her.

Now that he was sure of being quiet and alone, he opened his letter with feverish haste.

Tantin, who was not much of a scholar, wrote as follows :—

"My dear old Boy,—

"I take up my pen to send you a few lines, as you asked me to do. You ought to be much obliged

to me, I can tell you, for letter-writing is not in my line. Except to my old woman, (and not so very often to her), I hardly ever write a word except in my log book. But what I've said I'll do,—I've made a promise, and I'll keep it.

"First of all, I must tell you that as soon as we got into the Channel, and he smelt the land breeze from Normandy, poor Zero began to howl, bark, and whine in a way that quite touched the sailors, who as you know are not particularly tender-hearted. Hoping to quiet him, I sent him his food at the same time that the men had theirs, but he would neither eat nor drink. About evening he became a little quieter, probably because having barked and howled so much he had no voice left. As soon as I saw that he had finished his musical performance, I went down to talk to him about you. I am sure he understood, because when I mentioned your name, he looked up at me and wagged his tail, and with a dog that always means something.

"When I went on deck again, I left the hatch open, so as to give him some air. He jumped through this opening like a piece of india-rubber, dodged past my hands and slipped between my legs before I knew what was up. He rushed up on to the bridge and then down again, as if he was possessed. At one moment I thought he was going to take a header

THE WATER DASHED RIGHT UP IN HIS FACE.

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overboard, for he seemed as if he was clean daft. Not finding you,—for it was evident that it was you he was looking for,—he began rushing backwards and forwards like a lunatic, getting in everybody's way. At last he got driven up in a corner, and we took advantage of this opportunity to pass a string through the ring of his collar, and I gave him into the care of a cabin-boy, with strict instructions not to let him go for a minute. The boy was obliged to lean back and hold on to him with all his might, clinging to the mast with one hand, the dog pulled so hard at the cord.

"At last I told him to let the dog go, and see what he would do.

"At this moment we were going along about twelve knots an hour, with the wind right astern, and steering for the Atlantic. But the rascal hadn't lost his bearings; he rushed at once to the stern, near the rudder, and stood up on end with his paws so firmly placed on the taffrail that they seemed as if they were riveted there; and with his nose pointed towards the French coast, which however was no longer visible, sniffed the wind which was blowing from your direction. Soon the wind began to rise, and we shipped several seas. The water dashed right up into his face, and perfectly deluged him. We called to him, but he seemed as if he could not hear. He evidently considered that this

was his proper place, for as often as we pulled him away, he ran back again, from time to time uttering plaintive yappings.

"When he got to the Gulf of Gascony, and our cockle-shell of a boat danced on the crest of those large waves which come right over from America without altering their course, on purpose to annoy us, he apparently began to understand that he was wasting his time, and that you were not going to come walking over the sea to look for him; and besides, we had been obliged to tack so often, that I doubt, good sailor though he is, if he would have been able to find Honfleur on the chart. So he left his post and went and lay down at the foot of the mainmast, with your handkerchief in his mouth, so as to have something of yours near him, and seemed as if he would have torn the cabin-boy in pièces when the young rascal tried to take it from him. There he remained quiet, and took no notice of any one.

"My men, who are not brutes, were quite touched by the grief that he showed; they pitied him, and did their best to spoil him. If he had taken all that they offered him, he would have been dead of indigestion in eight hours; but it really seemed as if he wanted to die of grief. I am quite sure that animals can think! Instead of enjoying his food, and eating as much as

he could, your dog only just took enough to keep body and soul together. He saw that every one wanted to be kind to him, but without repulsing their advances, he seemed absolutely indifferent to them. If any one patted him he did not object, but he never seemed to take to anybody; and instead of being vexed, they seemed to like him all the better for it. They would have been sorry if it had been otherwise. The sailors said to each other that all this showed a wonderful constancy of affection, and that the dog was as sensible as a Christian. He will long be remembered on board the *John Hampden.*

"We arrived at St. Louis without accident, all well on board. Zero had seemed very listless during the latter part of the voyage. He slept a great deal, and often barked in his sleep, which made me think he was dreaming. He seemed very pleased to get on shore again. On landing he made two or three bounds, as if to take possession of the ground; then he began to run about, barking, with his nose close to the ground, as if trying to find some trace of you. I don't tell you this to vex you, old fellow, but because it is the truth. Your dog must have been uncommonly fond of you.

"But he didn't stop there! He did a thing in the harbour that a dog very rarely does, and which

proves that he has a wonderful amount of perseverance. He went on board ten different ships, jumping on to the deck when they were alongside the quay, and if needful, running along the planks like a regular cabin-boy, when it was necessary to do so to get from one to the other. Every one was astonished at him. He looked everywhere for you, peering into all the corners. When he was quite sure that you were nowhere to be found, he returned to our ship to have his dinner, and rest a bit; after which he resumed his search like one possessed.

"You know that when they are ashore, sailors' tongues wag freely; and, in this respect, mine yield the palm to none. In a few days Zero's history had gone the round of the harbour, and had even reached the town. Your dog is now as well known in St. Louis as the town clock. I may add that he is respected, and his company is sought by every one. An English captain has offered me a large sum for him, and will double it if I like; he is so fond of the dog. He says that if Zero ever belonged to him, he would make him his friend, and that when he died he would erect a handsome tombstone to his memory, with an inscription with gilt letters, in English and French.

"'In Dutch as well, my lord,' I replied to him, 'if

you want to be certain that he will understand. Dutch is his mother-tongue, and he can't speak any other language well.'

"All this makes me fear that I shall lose him. Sailors, without being downright thieves, are like soldiers, sad scamps. Amongst men of all nations there are sure to be some who would like nothing better than to appropriate the property of others.

"I have guarded against this as well as I can, by taking Zero away from the harbour. I have sent him up into the town to a hotel where I sometimes stop, and which I expect you remember, for we have often had a good dinner there together. The proprietor's dog is dead, a great Danish hound, with patches of black and white, who used to run before his carriage. Zero lives in his kennel, and I chain him up when I go out. When I am at the hotel he stops in my room, which suits him a good deal better. But he is so artful, that if I stop away too long, he manages to slip his collar over his head. He can do anything he likes with his paws, and a monkey is not more clever with his hands. We are now great friends, for he has a good heart, and sees that I am very fond of him. But you need not be afraid; I see plainly that I shall never be the same to him that you have been. Sometimes he looks at me as if he would like to ask if I could

give him any news of you; but as I have none, it is impossible for me to give them to him, so I have to content myself by talking to him about you, and that, I know, always pleases him.

"I have discharged my cargo without any harm or loss; but as I can't come back in ballast, I am negotiating for a little freight which I hope to obtain, and which I shall try to get on the best terms possible. It is some logwood for Caen and Cherbourg. This will bring me close home, and in this case I shall not make another voyage; for I begin to have warnings that I am getting old, and it is time for me to beat a retreat from active life. If things turn out as I wish, I shall be at home in two months, and then you can come and see your dog and your friend,

"JAMES TANTIN."

"P.S.—This letter was written two days ago, ready to go by the evening mail. I went to the kennel to see Zero, for I am more foolish than he is, and can never pass by without wanting to speak to him. But I found no dog there. I made inquiries, but the people at the hotel could tell me nothing, as usual; I raved and swore, but all to no purpose. I ran to the ship, but Zero was not there, and hadn't been there; but the cabin-boy, who is as wicked as he is

small, pretended that he had seen him pass by, going towards the outer basin. I wished to make every inquiry, so I went thither to be quite sure.

"I have several friends there, and amongst others the superintendent of the harbour, who often comes on board my ship, and knows Zero. I asked him if he had seen him, and he said he was quite sure he had seen your dog—my dog—following a sailor belonging to the *Two Friends*, a sloop from Dieppe, Captain Franqueville, who has during the past year made three voyages to Honfleur, and who, two days ago, sailed for Marseilles.

"It seemed that Zero was neither fastened nor dragged along by this fellow. Quite the reverse!—he was walking close to the heels of the sailor, as if he was following his master.

"This knocked me head over heels.

"If, said I to myself, this man is the Dutchman, his former owner, Zero is indeed lost to us. I went to find Franqueville, to obtain any information he could give me, as captains are usually inclined to help each other in these little matters. But it never rains but it pours. The sloop had already weighed anchor; she had left the port about an hour, making, as they said, sail for Marseilles, touching at Cadiz and Gibraltar. All this vexes me much, and I don't wish to

deny it. I had begun to love him dearly, and I feel that poor old Zero has put me in the wrong box. As for you, you are rid of him; and if I don't mistake it, that is what you wanted. Forgive me for not doing better, and be assured that I have done the best I could.

"ST. LOUIS, SENEGAL,
"*12th May*, 1878."

CHAPTER VIII.

CAPTAIN PIGOTT, who had devoured this letter with a glance of his eye, read it over slowly, paragraph by paragraph, line by line, and almost word by word. Then he spread it open, and placing it on his knees, shook his head two or three times, and said in a low voice,—

"When I took him away from home, I knew it would end like this."

At this moment he heard a slight noise of rustling leaves and crackling branches behind him, and some steps approached which made him turn his head. He found himself face to face with his wife.

"You here!" she said gently.

"Who is that letter from?" she added, her eyebrows frowning suddenly.

"It is from Zero," said Captain Pigott thoughtfully,

"Ah! so Zero writes now, does he?" replied Eliza shrugging her shoulders.

"I should have said from Captain Tantin, to whom I gave him."

"And who sends you news of him?"

"Exactly so; but what brings you here?"

"Oh! that is easily explained" said Eliza, suddenly softened, and seating herself on the rustic bench by the side of her husband. "You went out this morning rather sooner than usual, as it seemed to me. I saw that you walked quickly, and seemed pre-occupied; so I thought perhaps some misfortune had happened; and followed you."

"It's not so bad as that!" said Pigott drily. "Tantin has lost Zero, that is all."

Eliza would have liked to have replied to her husband, that since Zero was no longer his, it did not much matter where he was; but she did not dare to do so. She therefore, without replying, took the letter which he held out towards her, and read it to herself in a low voice.

"How very unfortunate!" she remarked, as she returned it to him. "Who could have foreseen such a thing."

"We can never foretell anything," said her husband without looking at her.

Two or three months passed, and the yellow tints of autumn once more coloured the leaves of the beeches, elms, and other trees that flourished on the slopes of the Hill of Grace, without any special event happening to enliven or sadden the somewhat monotonous, but untroubled, and take it all in all, happy life of our

SHE TOOK THE LETTER AND READ IT TO HERSELF.

friends, Captain and Mrs. Pigott. Neither one of them had once mentioned Zero's name. If the Captain treasured up painful recollections of the past, he at any rate had the sense to keep them to himself. As for his wife, it seemed as if she would have given anything to make the Captain forget these distressing

souvenirs of which she had been the cause, and whose intensity she had not previously fully estimated; for she showed an unvarying kindness and gentleness towards him. In fact, there was a complete change in her, which it would be unjust to pass over without alluding to. It was quite sufficient for her to know that anything would give her husband pleasure, in order for her to hasten at once to do it. Pigott had lost a dog, but he had found a wife. Perhaps amongst my readers there may be some who would not complain if a similar thing happened to them, and it is certain that the Captain did not complain.

Only, sometimes he asked himself what had become of Zero; and at such moments a shadow would pass over his face. But he always tried to drive away these painful thoughts, and reproached himself for what he called a weakness unworthy of a man. On these occasions, Eliza always knew what he was thinking about, and it made her sad for the rest of the day.

But she looked after her house like a good housewife, and in all Honfleur there was not a better managed establishment than hers. Although she was not very well off, by dint of economy and a judicious use of her modest resources, she managed so well that they lived as comfortably as most of the rich shop-

keepers in the town. It must not be supposed that Captain Pigott was indifferent to these merits in his wife. But it was only by dint of much trouble and labour that Mrs. Pigott obtained these results. For example on market-days she rose with the dawn, and followed by Jane, who carried the basket, she bought at first hand the best things which the country people brought to the town.

On a certain Saturday, as they were both returning with a heap of good things intended for the delectation of the Captain, who was still asleep, Eliza, who was walking first, perceived before the door, and stretched across it, a strange figure, the nature of which, she did not at first comprehend. It looked like a dark mass, or a heap of black or grey hairs which did not move.

She started, with a feeling of fear, which was natural though scarcely warranted under the circumstances,—for the object seemed quite harmless,—and called to the servant.

Jane, who was a country-bred girl, and not easily frightened, passed in front of her mistress, who had stepped back two or three paces, and touched the unknown object with her foot. It gave vent to a plaintive murmur like a groan; then slowly and sorrowfully it raised itself, and they saw that it was a dog.

"Bless my heart, madam, it's Zero!" cried Jane, who in her astonishment had let fall the basket of provisions. Zero,—for in truth it was he,—on hearing his name, gently wagged his tail, as if to show that he understood what Jane had just said. But when he saw Mrs. Pigott, the poor brute, remembering that his mistress did not love him, and having lost all his pluck on account of the privations through which he had passed; with drooping ears, without complaining, but only throwing towards her a sorrowful glance, which seemed to ask for pity, dragged himself slowly and painfully to the other side of the road, and lay down at the edge of the ditch, his eyes fixed on the house into which he perhaps would never again enter, but unto whose threshold he had returned in order to die.

"O madam!" said Jane, who under a rough exterior carried a kind heart, "see how thin he is, his bones are coming through his skin!"

"Yes," said Eliza; "any one can see that he has suffered." Then she added, "I should not have thought it possible that I should feel so sorry."

The look of the sufferer, so fearful and pitiful, more eloquent than any human words, went straight to the heart of the young woman and filled her with remorse.

"IT'S ZERO," CRIED JANE.

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"How cruel I must have been to him to make him so frightened of me."

She called to him. Zero got up as if to go to her; but, as though he could not believe in his good fortune, he lay down again in the same place. Mrs. Pigott understood what was passing in his mind.

"Well!" she said, "as you won't come to me, I shall come to you."

She quickly crossed the road. Zero crouched down in terror; but in order to reassure him, she took between her two little hands his great head—which had not become any handsomer during his travels, but which now, as ever, was full of intelligence—and coaxed and caressed him, calling him all the pretty names she could think of, instead of as formerly treating him to a series of rebuffs and scoldings.

The change was so great, that at first Zero, who had been rendered suspicious by his bitter experiences, could not believe it was real. He looked several times at his mistress, as if to make sure that she was not deceiving him.

But little by little he became convinced, and understanding everything, he licked her hands, and looked at her with eyes which clearly said,—

"It *is* true, isn't it? You surely would not deceive a poor dog who never did you any harm."

Jane had just opened the kitchen door, and Zero experienced the most passionate longings to enter. But he still hesitated, and remaining motionless in the same place, looked at the interior of the house in which he had formerly been so happy, and from whence he had been so cruelly driven.

"Come along, then," said Mrs. Pigott, who guessed his thoughts, and wished to wipe out the memory of past unkindness.

She went in, and he followed.

But he was so exhausted by fatigue and want, that no sooner had he entered the kitchen than he lay down, as if he had not sufficient strength to stand any longer.

"He is dying of hunger," said the soft-hearted Jane.

Eliza cut a large, thick slice of bread, and breaking it up into very small pieces, gave them to Zero one by one. The famished dog bolted them at once. They disappeared as if they had been thrown into an abyss. He would have devoured the whole loaf, and Eliza was so delighted at giving him such pleasure, that she would have been only too glad to give him as much as he would take.

"That's enough, ma'am," said the prudent Jane. "He must not eat too much at once, after such a

long fast, for that would give him indigestion. I will make him some broth presently."

But Zero, now that his hunger was somewhat satisfied, remembered that he had a heart. He glanced round in all directions, and both Mrs. Pigott and Jane knew at once who he was looking for.

He went and sniffed at some of the Captain's clothes that Jane had put on a chair in front of the fire the previous evening, and his fine sense of smell told him at once who they belonged to.

As he was now sure that the master was near, he looked by turns at Eliza and at the short flight of stairs that led to the Captain's room, as if he wanted to ask leave to go up.

"Ah, madam!" said Jane, clasping her hands. "How pleased master will be to see him again!"

"Yes, won't he? And I wish him to be happy as soon as possible; so open the door gently, and let Zero go in and wake him."

Zero had listened to this dialogue so intently that any one would have thought that he understood what was said. He went slowly upstairs behind the servant, but she had scarcely opened the door, when he pushed past her—at the risk of getting entangled in her skirts and knocking her down—and rushed into the room.

He saw his master, and jumping on to the bed, he alighted all of a heap on the chest of the sleeper. It is not often that any one is awakened in so rough and ready a manner.

The Captain uttered a low cry, even before he opened his eyes, and the dog, doubtless thinking he had hurt him, jumped off the bed as quickly as he had jumped on. But John Pigott, now wide awake, looked around, and seeing in his room the being that he thought was at the other end of the world, began to doubt whether he was not still asleep. But the weight of Zero, who jumped on to his bed for the second time, convinced him at last that his dog was really there. Besides, the very extravagance of his joy was an additional proof. What other dog than Zero would have loved him so much, and have shown such transports of delight at seeing him again. Truly one does not meet two such dogs in a lifetime.

The Captain buried both his hands in the shaggy mane of Zero, who during the last few days had evidently neglected his toilet, and looking straight into his eyes,—

"Yes, it's you!" he said. "You are no handsomer than you used to be, but you look as good as ever. Where do you hail from now?"

Zero would much have liked to reply to all these

questions, but the Captain put them in French, and the dog of Norkind van der Tromp only understood Low German, or rather I should say Dutch, so he was obliged to content himself with licking his master's hands, and looking at him with all the tenderness that a dog can express by signs.

Mrs. Pigott had sufficient delicacy of feeling not to go up just at first. She did not wish to mar by her presence the joy which the two friends felt in being together again. But after a few moments, feeling that a prolonged absence on her part would appear a piece of affectation, she entered the room, smiling and pleased, feeling happy in her husband's joy.

The Captain, on seeing her come in, suddenly became aware of the fact that Zero had jumped on to the bed, and also that he had not washed his paws that morning, so in order to avoid a storm which he felt would throw a cloud over the first hours of Zero's return—

"Get down, you bad dog!" he said, taking him by the skin of his neck; "don't you see that we had clean sheets yesterday?"

"Let him alone," said Eliza, touched in spite of herself; "you seem so happy together, that it is well worth an extra washing."

These words so contrasted with the former be-

haviour of his wife, that the Captain, delighted but no less surprised, looked at her once or twice to make certain that she was serious.

His wife noticed his air of astonishment, and replied to what he evidently thought, though he did not say it.

"*I* found him, and sent him to you! Don't dwell on past troubles. I hope that in the future they won't disturb the happiness of all three of us."

"All three of us! Do you really mean it?" asked the Captain, who could scarcely believe his ears.

"Yes; all three of us," replied she. "I have been very unkind in times past to this poor dog," she added, as she caressingly patted Zero's rough head, which had never been so honoured before. "But it wasn't quite all my fault, my dear. I really thought that you were too fond of him."

"My dear child, I certainly am very fond of the old dog; but the love that I have for him bears no comparison to that which I have for you."

Mrs. Pigott's pretty pink and white cheeks became suddenly a deep rose colour. She raised her blue eyes and looked at her husband, and then lowered them again

"I must say," she remarked, "that I used to think him ugly, but now he seems to be quite handsome."

"Which proves that love is blind," said the Captain laughing, "for the poor fellow is uglier than ever."

"Well, so long as he seems beautiful to me, you won't complain, I suppose. I am not hard-hearted," she added, "and you know how fond I am of you, my dear John; so as soon as I was sure that you really preferred me to our friend here——"

"Eliza!"

"And that you had sent him away to please me, my feelings underwent a sudden transformation. I was sorry to have sent him away just because he stole two eggs; and besides, those I had from the grocer were not so bad after all. Then when I saw the trouble that his absence caused you, and with what gentleness you bore your sorrow, trying even to hide it from me, I felt quite remorseful. Really, if I had known where to find him, I would have gone to look for him myself, and have dragged him back to you by his ears; and now that he has returned of his own accord, you may be sure that I shan't be unkind to him any more. I should like him to love *me* too. Do you think he will?"

"I am confident that he will worship you," said Pigott, laughing, "and I think it will be my turn to be jealous now."

"Then we shall all lead a happy life together," said Eliza, joyously clapping her two little hands.

And she spoke truly. Henceforward nothing troubled the innocent joys, nothing troubled the happy peacefulness of the three friends. Zero, whose sufferings had only lasted a few days, quickly regained flesh and strength, and by his affection, his gentleness, and his intelligence, rejoiced the hearts of his master and mistress, whom he loved almost equally. He even pretended sometimes to have a preference for the latter; but we may well believe that this was nothing but a natural piece of gallantry on his part, for he occasionally would give a knowing glance towards his master, which clearly said,—

"Don't you make a mistake! You know that really I love you best; but we must flatter the ladies a little."

John Pigott thought that his dog was right, and took care not to complain.

CHAPTER IX.

THE news of the return of the lost dog spread like wildfire, not only in Honfleur, but in all the country round. The story was retailed most energetically by Jane, who seemed to have no less affection than her master for the intelligent animal that had run her errands so well.

The honest cook, whose geography was scarcely up to the mark, even went so far as to tell every one that he had *swum* all the way from Senegal. "And in proof of it," she added, "he was still wet when mistress and I found him at the door."

I must admit that this version was not deemed altogether satisfactory by the sailors, who, considering the distance, and the difficulty of procuring provisions on the way, declined to believe in the possibility of such a feat.

But in spite of this, a great desire was felt by all to see the hero of this strange adventure, and during the next week there was a constant succession of visitors at White Rock Villa. We may be sure that there was no lack of questions. They all wanted to know the how and the why of everything. Where did he come from? Who had brought him back? Was it possible that he had found his way back all by himself?

Pigott invariably replied,—

"Don't ask me anything, for I know nothing! He went away; he has come back; and we are delighted, —that is all that I can tell you. How has he done it? You will be very kind if you will tell me, for I can't make it out myself, and should be very much obliged if any one would take the trouble to give me an explanation."

Captain Pigott received the explanation when he least expected it.

One day, as he was walking on the quay with his dog, who now was as constantly in attendance on him as his own shadow, near the little lighthouse he met Peter Paris, captain of the *Utility*, a smart ship, hailing from the little port of Isigny, on the river Aure, to the east of the bay of Veys.

Zero went up to him, and without making any

exaggerated demonstrations of joy, at least showed a polite amount of pleasure at seeing him.

The two men were not strangers to each other, and more than once had had a friendly glass together.

They stopped to speak to one another.

THERE WAS NO LACK OF QUESTIONS.

"You know my dog, then?" said Pigott to Paris, after they had shaken hands.

"Rather; that is to say, I know him without knowing him; but I didn't know he was yours, or I should have sent him back to you myself."

"Thanks! but you see that wasn't necessary; he has come back of his own accord," said John Pigott,

laughing; "and a long way too, I can tell you. But tell me where you met him."

"It's a queer story. You must know that about six months ago I was at Marseilles, where I had just discharged a cargo of butter, when I met on the quay of the harbour of Joliette the second mate of the sloop *The Two Friends*, which had just come from Senegal. Your dog was following him. He hung his head, and had the listless air of one who is bored. The second mate and I went to have a glass at the Oriental Café. Of course the dog came with us. When we got there he sat down on his haunches, and looked at us with an expression that seemed to say,—

"'Well, you two, how long are you going to stop here? I should like to be off.'

"He looked so comical with his weary expression, that I gave him a bit of sugar. Then he came and gently laid his head on my knee. It seemed to me that in doing this, he meant to say 'Thank you.'"

"'Is this your dog?' I asked of the second mate.

"'He's mine and he's not mine,' he replied. He belongs to everybody and to nobody.'

"'How so?'

"'Oh, the thing is simple enough. The day that we left Senegal he followed—without our being able to tell why—a sailor from Honfleur, who was helms-

man on board *The Two Friends*, my ship. This sailor, who is fond of all animals, asked leave to keep him on board, which was granted him. But the poor fellow died on the voyage, when we were near Gibraltar. Then the dog, being masterless, became the property of the ship's company. Every one loved him on account of his wonderful intelligence. On his part, however, he seemed to have no preference for anybody. He went about sometimes with one, sometimes with another, with his ears pricked up, and his eyes looking in all directions. It was clear he was looking for somebody, but whoever that somebody was, it is certain he did not find him. I never saw a dog who so keenly scrutinised any new comer. But I've talked long enough, Captain. We sail tomorrow for Oran, and I haven't a moment to spare. Delighted to have met you.'

"The second mate of *The Two Friends* went out. The dog followed him, or at least he seemed to do so, but it was easy to see that he was not very anxious to keep him in sight. An hour afterwards I went on board my ship, and on turning round, to my astonishment I saw the dog following at my heels.

"'Well,' I said, 'it's clear that he would sooner go to Normandy than to Africa.'

"It seemed so funny a thing to me to see him

asking for a passage, now on one boat and now on another, that I wished to give him one in the *Utility*, as he had had on *The Two Friends*, provided he wasn't too dainty in his feeding. This seemed to suit him, for he did not leave my ship again.

"Four days after, I sailed for Caen with a cargo of oil. I was proud of my new friend, and should have liked to have taken a walk with him in the harbour. But the day after our arrival, he basely deserted, and I, not knowing what had become of him, did not honour him with regrets that he did not deserve; but as he now does me the honour of recognising me, I won't bear malice, and I will give him my hand on it."

Saying this, Captain Paris stretched out his great fist towards Zero, who gravely put his paw in it.

"I now understand it all," said Pigott. "I gave the poor fellow to Captain Tantin."

"Of the *John Hampden?*"

"Just so. Tantin took him out to Senegal. There he met a sailor from Honfleur, whom he recognised, and by whom he doubtless hoped some day to be taken there. After the death of this sailor he sought his fortune elsewhere, and by good luck he met you."

"But suppose instead of meeting me, he had come across a captain sailing for China? After all, that was possible."

"Quite so! but in that case he would have gone round the world in some way or other. But I am certain, my dear Captain, that he would rather have travelled about for ten years, than give up looking for his master."

"Well, you know how to make a dog fond of you, and no mistake," said the master of the *Utility;* "but how did he get here from Caen?"

"I assure you I haven't asked him, but I can guess. He has been twice to Caen and back with me. He remembered the town, and with his wonderful instinct, he found his way by himself. After all, the distance between the two places is only about twenty miles. For a rascal like him that was nothing, a mere joke, just a nice walk, and he has done much more extraordinary things in the course of his life. Only, as you didn't give him any money to pay his expenses, he wasn't very well received at the inns, and when he got here he was half dead with hunger; but you see he is quite fat again now!"

"It seems to me that your cookery suits him better than that of the *Utility;* and I don't suppose he will be in a hurry to take another voyage."

"I think," said Pigott, as he took leave of Captain Paris, "that both he and I will end our days here."

So ends the true and marvellous history of *The*

Captain's Dog. Some day, perhaps, it will become a legend, with the addition of some fresh details which will have the disadvantage of not being true, like these I have here narrated.

Zero still lives, and I have the honour to count him among my friends. The visitors to Trouville, Villers, and Houlgate, during their excursions to the Hill of Grace must have noticed, during the past year, in the yard of White Rock Villa, the door of which is almost always open, a fine child about two years old, fat and rosy, who is Captain Pigott's son and heir. He is still quite small, but already passes a good deal of his time in pulling the ears of a dog, half spaniel and half hound: this is Zero, greyer and fatter than of yore, but still good as ever. He worships his master's son, and allows himself to be pulled about and tormented with an inexhaustible patience. Sometimes Mr. Pigott junior, an inexperienced but plucky horseman, thinks he would like a ride on his dog. He bestrides Zero, who gravely submits; the youngster buries his chubby hands in the dog's shaggy mane, in which they are entirely hidden; or sometimes, if he is afraid of falling, he clasps with his two little arms the neck of the good old dog, who only shakes his head when he feels that baby is choking him. Then begins an interminable trot round the yard. Snowy and Smutty, who lay

THEN BEGINS AN INTERMINABLE TROT.

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better than ever—their nests have been placed several feet from the ground, so as to keep Zero out of temptation—take care not to get in the way of their old enemy, and run off, trailing their wings and uttering little frightened cries, as fowls do when they are scared. But Zero has the most profound contempt for them, and takes no notice of them.

At one of the windows Eliza is perched, so as to watch the antics of her youthful son, and she smiles at the Captain, who, seated under an arbour of clematis and jessamine, is not too much absorbed in the *Harbour News*, the paper he prefers, or the *Messenger*, of Havre, to throw from time to time affectionate glances towards the two beings who, after his wife, he loves best in the world—his son and his dog.

THE END.

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